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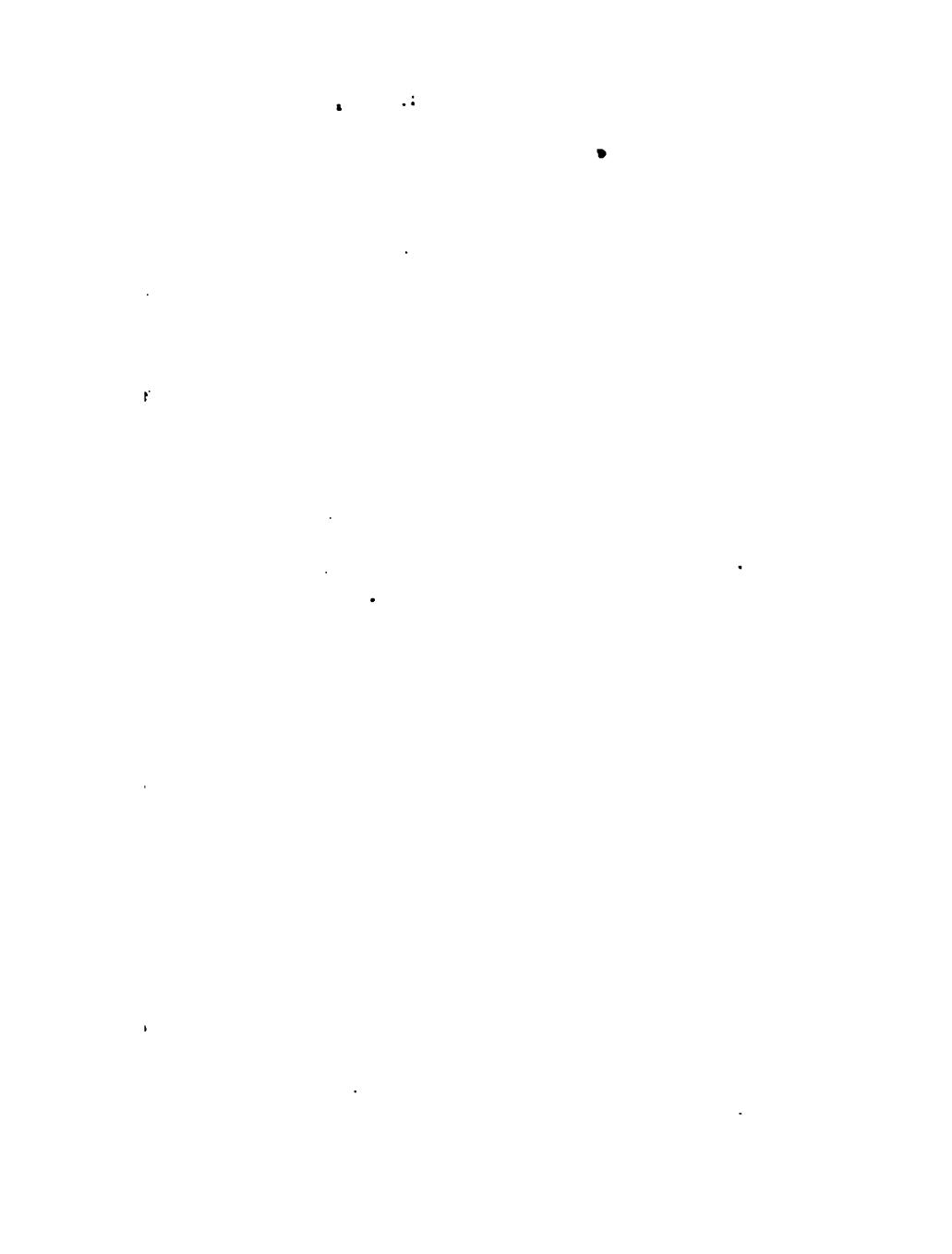
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JANE TAYLOR









JANE TAYLOR.





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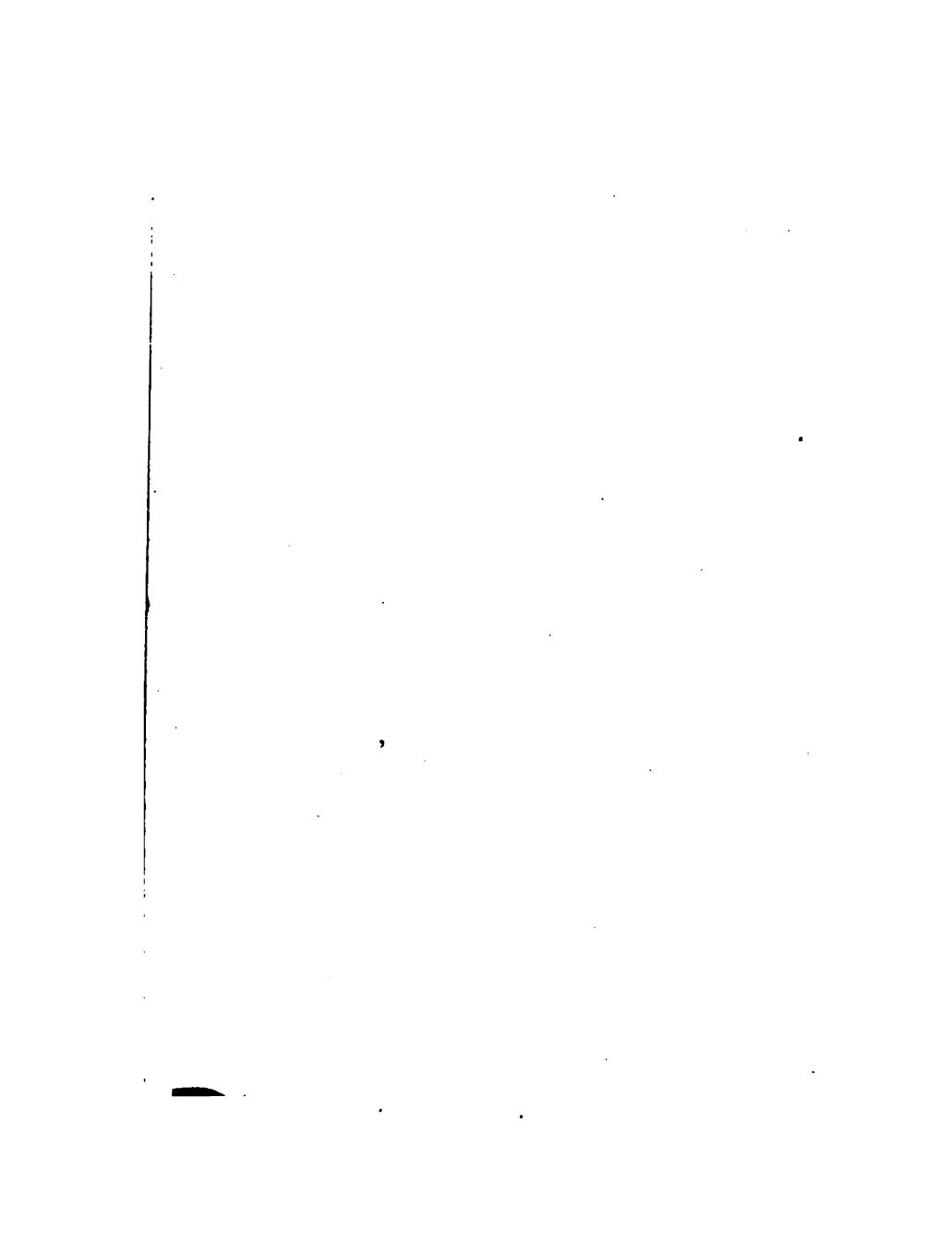


JANE TAYLOR  
HER LIFE AND LETTERS



JANE TAYLOR  
*From a painting by Mrs. Carter*

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS  
LONDON, EDINBURGH AND NEW YORK



# JANE TAYLOR:

## *Her Life and Letters.*

BY

MRS. H. C. KNIGHT,  
AUTHOR OF "NO PAINS, NO GAINS," "THE ROCKET," ETC.

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Oh, then, though fainting and distressed,  
I will my way pursue;  
There is a home, there is a rest,  
There is a heaven in view.



LONDON:

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW.  
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

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# J A N E T A Y L O R.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CHILDHOOD.

ILL you visit the small village of Lavenham? It is in the county of Suffolk, sixty miles from London. In June 1786, a gentleman with his wife and two little girls, accompanied by trunks and bandboxes, stopped before a large house at one end of the village, a little off the highroad.

The lady wears a weary and depressed look. There is little eagerness or hope on her countenance as she catches the first glimpses of her new home; nor is there much in the street through which they pass to awaken interest or pleasure. It is called Spinners' Street, and is

lined with humble cottages, before which, out-of-doors, mothers and daughters ply the wheel, while the father within works his lumbering loom. The whiz and hum of toil is heard from early morning till late at night, yet the labour of eighteen hours hardly suffices to keep hunger from the door; for business is dull, and growing duller. Machinery is beginning to compete with handcraft. Carding and spinning mills are being built elsewhere; and wool is finding shorter cuts to market. What are Suffolk hands and wheels to do?

That is not our business to answer; but you see it does not look like London. The strangers—Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Taylor—are from the metropolis, in quest of more comfort for their growing family than a small income can buy for them in London. The country had an inexpressible charm, as discussed amid city fog and smoke, which a long tedious journey over poor roads and in poorer conveyances had almost, if not quite, dispelled.

Mrs. Taylor's heart sunk. Besides, it had been hard to part with London friends. What had Lavenham to offer in their stead? She

was a woman of sense, however, and suppressed her disgust as well as she could, keeping her eye bravely on the advantages of a change. The house, large and commodious, had been rented for six instead of twenty pounds. Attached to it was a garden, with an arbour, walks, flowers, and fruit; pure air, clear skies, and an abundance of sunshine, completed the desirableness of the new location.

Mr. Taylor was bred an engraver. His father was an engraver; his brother too. The taste ran in the family—a family of large intelligence, great excellences, and untiring industry; and since his work could be done as well away from London, family interests could be best secured by making a home elsewhere.

They were Independents. Independency had more than its usual burden of odium at this time. The French Revolution was beginning to convulse the world, and the fair show it was then making in behalf of freedom enlisted many true men on its side. England was alive with discussion. Liberal opinions were expressed in sharp and earnest words, and national renovation was reckoned among

the speedy possibilities of the times. Non-conformity, supposed to be as independent in civil as in ecclesiastical matters, had often to bear injurious suspicions from Tory neighbours and good churchmen.

Mr. Taylor had liberal leanings ; his wife was more conservative ; but both were too wise and busy to make politics a root of offence unto themselves and others.

In the earlier years of their married life, Mrs. Taylor had given herself with anxious assiduity to family cares. The accomplishments of her maidenhood were laid aside ; books were rarely opened ; the cultivation of her mind was neglected ; and those intellectual tastes which had delighted the lover, were lost to the husband in an absorbing monopoly of domestic duties. An old friend saw the danger.

“ Your husband,” she said, “ may indeed have a housekeeper and a nurse, but I am sure he has no companion ; it will be well if in time he does not grow tired of you. The affections of a man of taste cannot fix permanently on a mere plod, and you are certainly nothing better.”

Hard but wholesome reproof. A plod ! Mrs. Taylor saw it all at a glance. She already felt herself slipping out of sympathy with her husband's pursuits : she retrograding, he going on ; of course the distance must widen, and she become less and less capable of a true wife's place.

At breakfast and tea time a book had come with him to table ; reading had taken the place of conversation, and social enjoyment was more rarely one of the pleasures of the board.

What could she do ? Where was the time ? How could she command any for reading and self-improvement ? But one servant ; the children to take care of ; so much to do requiring head and hands incessantly. A bright thought shot through the busy brain.

"I will propose to read aloud at breakfast and tea," she said.

The proposal was made, cordially accepted, and immediately adopted ; and *it*—the habit of reading aloud at meals and in the evening—became a cherished family institution. Did it work well ?

“ Yes,” replies Mrs. Taylor; “ it has rescued a mind from inactivity which was rapidly degenerating and losing the few attainments it had acquired; it has beguiled many a care and diverted many a pain; now affording energy to weakness and languor, which in most cases would have been deemed insurmountable obstacles to such a custom. Besides this, must be taken into account the incalculable benefit arising to the children of the family, from the volumes they have thus heard, in addition to their own reading. In a word, the custom has proved one of the prominent blessings of our lives.”

Anne and Jane, the two little girls, are five and three on their coming to Lavenham, and are delighted with the freedom of their new home. The old arbour, shady walks, and grassy fields have a world of innocent enjoyment in store for them, besides the bloom they will put on their pale cheeks, and the strength they will give to their delicate frames.

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor had an ideal of education which they vigorously set themselves to realize in their growing family. The happy

mean between injudicious indulgence on the one hand, and the severe system of "a word and a blow, and the blow first," on the other, then too common, and from which both had suffered, it was their daily effort to find.

A strictly home education was determined upon. The children were to find their mental discipline and daily pleasure under the same roof.

"Their dear father," Mrs. Taylor tells us, "found his utmost energies necessary for the support of his family; nevertheless, he as zealously entered into his department of their education as though it had been his sole employment. My own health at this time was considerably undermined, and many unavoidable chasms ensued in my operations in consequence of nearly annual confinements, our first six children having been born in little more than seven years; but neither these hindrances nor indispensable household affairs prevented me from devoting a large portion of my time to this darling object. I kept, when not confined to my chamber, regular school-hours; and, when occupied with domestic

affairs, my girls, whenever it was possible, have been at my side, and by the questions I encouraged them to ask, their minds were stored with such knowledge as my yet scanty store enabled me to dispense; and, that every fragment of time might be gathered up with frugality, a hymn at least could be repeated at our time of dressing. Our evenings, while I plied my needle, were at once cheerfully and profitably spent."

Hymns, indeed, formed a favourite means of religious culture; and is it not one with many advantages? Instruction, warning, penitential confession, petition, promise, praise—everything which the sincere heart should desire or utter—find expression in the hymns. They are easily learned, and readily retained and recalled. The rhythm lingers and wanders in the memory, to give, when needed, a form to thoughts too weak to find their own expression, and, amid the vicissitudes of life, to re-assert those divine truths which can alone interpret them. Hymns stir the sluggish soul to conflict, and march it on to victory. Their words of trust and pleading have borne the

experience of how many penitents! They have whispered the sweetest solace in the hour of sorrow, beguiled sickness of its languor, and banished from many a wakeful midnight the anxious forebodings which kept eyes from sleeping.

In no way can parents deposit more religious truth in the minds of children, and leave it safely there to fructify the growing character, than by teaching and having repeated the beautiful and impressive lyrics with which our literature abounds. Among the studies of childhood hymns should have a sure place—not as tasks, but as contributions rather to the family stock of improvement and enjoyment.

It was this, perhaps, which gave bent to the little girls, Anne and Jane, and at an early age fostered a taste for poetic expression. While yet a mere child, Jane amused herself and her parents by presenting in verse requests most doubtful of favour. The following scribble, at eight years, foreshadows "Hymns for Infant Minds," which have not yet ceased to please and instruct our little ones:—

“ Ah, dear papa, did you but know  
The trouble of your Jane,  
I’m sure you would relieve me now,  
And ease me of my pain.

“ Although your garden is but small,  
And more, indeed, you crave,  
There’s one small bit not used at all,  
And this I wish to have.

“ A pretty garden I would make,  
That you would like to know ;  
Then pray, papa, for pity’s sake  
This bit of ground bestow.

“ For whether, now, I plant or sow,  
The chickens eat it all.  
I’d fain my sorrows let you know,  
But for the tears that fall.

“ My garden, then, should be your lot.  
I’ve often heard you say  
There useful trees you wish to put,  
But mine were in the way.”

Jane often used her pen, but rarely confided her stories to any one but Anne. The sisters took great delight in each other’s society, and their parents gave them room and time for all innocent amusements. The house was large enough to afford a play-room especially for them; and while money for an occasional new toy was never grudged, their ingenuity and interest were oftener excited to manufacture them, thus

giving opportunity and means, as far as possible, for entertaining themselves. The listless questions, "What shall we do?" "What can I play?" so often heard from children accustomed to be amused by others, were never asked, since their active minds were too full of projects to admit of idleness or uncertainty.

Two little girls about their own age, Anne and Jane Wilkinson, were their chosen friends. For a few years the four were daily playmates, until Mr. Wilkinson emigrated to America—which gave the children their first parting pang; and it was a grief our little Jane did not soon get over.

She was a sprightly child, full of sympathy and intelligence, a favourite everywhere, especially at the baker's shop, where she was often hoisted on the bread-board to "speak a piece" for the amusement of all present. Praises never turned her little head, neutralized as they were sure to be by a wise mother, intent upon training her aright.

Other children were born into the family during their stay at Lavenham. The long sickness and slowly-returning health of Mr.

Taylor brought its share of care and discouragement into the well-ordered household, while the political clouds which darkened the sky sometimes showered terrors on older as well as younger hearts. A thousand rumours floated in the air concerning French atrocities, corrected or corroborated by a weekly newspaper, *The Bury News*. On its arrival Mr. Taylor glanced it over, reserving a fuller acquaintance with its contents for the reading at dinner or the longer leisure of the evening. Who can picture the excitement of the children as, bit by bit, the bloody recitals of the Revolution were read and discussed in their hearing ?

“I will never forget,” said Isaac, then a small boy, “the terrible impression made upon my own mind by hearing the news of the death of the French king. It was a dismal winter’s afternoon, as I perfectly remember, when a neighbour suddenly broke in upon our games, exclaiming, ‘They have cut off the king’s head !’ And a ‘reign of terror’ pictured its gloomy shades on their fancy, which even the thoughtlessness of childhood could not wholly dispel.”

To this were added social disturbances which agitated even the remotest hamlet of England. Party-feeling ran high. Old neighbours became deadly enemies. Friends ceased to be on speaking terms ; and every one suspected of sympathy with democratic movements was pronounced disloyal, and fell under the ban of public obloquy.

Mr. Taylor, as a leading man among the Dissenters, became an object of dislike to his "church and king" acquaintances. There had been riots in many places ; and the mob in Lavenham, countenanced as they well knew they should be by the gentry and clergy, longed to attack the "Meetingers," as they called them, and have their share of plunder and excitement.

One afternoon a friendly neighbour, in hot haste, ran into the Taylors' to warn them of approaching danger. A furious mob, with drums beating and flags flying, were assembling in the square, breathing vengeance on Mr. Taylor and his innocent premises.

The terrified children betook themselves to watch the approaching enemy, and soon the van appeared at the head of the street, brand-

ishing pitchforks and mattocks, and altogether wearing a most threatening aspect.

What way of escape? Justices sided with the gentry, and there seemed nothing to ward off a disastrous issue. Deliverance, however, came. As the mob swept down the street with its noisy hubbub, a portly clergyman in official rig opened his door, and motioned the leaders to stop. An address was made. What its purport was, the Taylors could not hear; but, behold, the tumult ceased, the rioters retired, and peace was restored to the quiet street.

Mr. Taylor and his family breathed freely once more, and a night of quiet restored the hope and courage of the household.

To whom were they indebted for deliverance? Under God, to his brother minister. So thought Mr. Taylor, who, early the next morning, called to express the family's gratitude for his kind interference in their behalf.

“Spare your thanks, Mr. Taylor,” was the stately reply: “my wife’s sister is very ill, and I thought so much noise and confusion, if the people effected their purpose so near us, might

have been very prejudicial to her in her weak state."

So much for the neighbourly courtesies of the times, and for that party-spirit which recognizes no neighbourly tie.

## CHAPTER II.

### HOME LIFE.

“  RURAL home is the best home of the domestic virtues and affections. It is within the circle of a detached country-house that family life opens itself out at large ; it suns itself, blooms, and attains its ripeness ; it preserves itself in the faithful memory of survivors, and so holds itself entire to the end, as if an assured immortality were wrapt up in its folds,” writes one in after-years of the happy household of Lavenham.

“ A much higher rate of family health may be reckoned on,” he goes on to say, “ than in city or city suburbs. We are exempt from the visitation of a hundred ills, real or imaginary, to which our city friends are liable. Along

with purer air, earlier hours, and country routine, there will be greater simplicity of mind, manners, and tastes. Nor are we tyrannized over by conventional forms. It is true, we are not able to talk so well of all things; but we think more, and are more reasonable."

Thus argues Isaac Taylor. Jane's younger brother and all the family agree with him.

The seclusion of Lavenham, however, is now to be abandoned for a wider sphere, opened to Mr. Taylor by a call from a Dissenting congregation at Colchester to become their minister.

Early in 1796 he removed thither.

Colchester, on the south bank of the river Colne, fanned by the cold breezes of the North Sea, is rich in natural scenery and antiquarian interest. Added to this, at the advent of the new pastor, it was alive with troops collected to guard against their dangerous neighbours across the Channel.

The family was soon reorganized, and a larger circle of out-door interests did not lessen the assiduous industries of home.

Mr. Taylor himself seems to have been a

man of remarkable achievements. As an artist he continued his labours. Constant and careful with his pulpit exercises, he visited his people regularly and affectionately, was always present at ministers' meetings, and never lacked an elaborate essay when it was required. He had pupils at home and abroad, delivered frequent lectures, and in addition to all this zealously set himself to the education of his own family. Health and system must have been necessary to accomplish all this.

Jane was in her thirteenth year on their removal to Colchester. Four years younger was her brother Isaac. Two other brothers and a sister were all who lived to grow up.

In addition to the usual studies of girlhood, Mr. Taylor wished to qualify his daughters for supporting themselves. Since engraving was an art in which woman had already distinguished herself, no branch of business could be so easily and naturally taught them as this. At one time four of his children were taking lessons by his side.

"Anne and I often say," said Jane, "that much as we enjoy other things, we are never

more happy than when steadily engaged in the room where we engrave ; that is our paradise. You may smile at the comparison," she continues, " and we know the inconveniences connected with our engagements there ; but experience teaches us that comfort and happiness are compatible with inconveniences. We have every inducement to industry, and we are thankful that that which is necessary is also agreeable to us."

Lest the studio should give them a distaste and inaptness for more womanly occupations, Mrs. Taylor faithfully exercised her daughters in all the duties of the broom and duster, the needle, and the kneading-board.

The family were early risers, and every moment of the day was thriftily employed ; not as a task—there was no feeling of bondage or restraint ; no sense of hurry goaded them on ; but each, incited by a spontaneous and loving impulse, entered heartily on the work set them to do. " And I believe," writes Jane to her friend in America, " we enjoy a greater proportion of real happiness than many who live a life of apparent ease and pleasure. We

find it is employment that gives recreation its greatest charm; and we enjoy with a double relish little pleasures which, to those who are already fatigued with doing nothing, appear tiresome or uninteresting. When I see people perpetually tormented with *ennui*—satiated with amusements, indifferent to every object of interest—I indeed congratulate myself that I have not one spare moment in which these demons can assail me. You, my dear Jane, know the pleasures of industry, and you know that it is essential to our real happiness."

Nor was it all work. Birthday parties, excursions into the country, and summer walks contributed to the stock of family enjoyment.

"Summer is delightful," says Jane; "but I have much to love in winter, and I can truly say I enjoy the hours of quiet industry it always introduces."

The winter evenings were usually spent together, each occupied by some lighter work of pencil or needle, while Mrs. Taylor read aloud.

"And those daily social readings, continued

from year to year, while a household is running its course of changes, constitute a bright continuity of its intellectual and moral existence," wrote Isaac Taylor in after-years, recommending the habit.

Were not the youngest sent to bed? Could they keep quiet?

"At that time, a time of old-fashioned discipline, the younger children knew how to sit with their noiseless amusements at a side table, not in terror of a nurse-maid; and the bairns of even three years were allowed to make acquaintance with the English of books."

What good can children derive from hearing a book read which they do not understand?

"Much, in many ways. A child of any sensitiveness," replies he, "is alternately listening or not listening to a book, the voice being that of one who is ordinarily listened to with pleasure; the child is caught by the mere rhythm of the sentences—and words that have a rhythm of their own catch the infant ear; in the frequent hearing they get themselves attended to and at last interpreted. It seems to me a great error, and it is the parent of

errors more serious than itself, that, as a child should understand everything step by step, so he will care for nothing that he does not understand. The very contrary is, I think, the truth. Nor is it the music of the words or sentences only which awakens the young brain. At the end of twenty-five years the brain is the tenacious repository of millions and millions of records, words, things, feelings, until the crowded mass has become a congeries of lexicons and encyclopædias. Family readings are not to supply the lack of regular and stated instruction going on in the schoolroom ; they avail to quicken intelligence rather than impart learning ; not a schooling for the younger members of the family, but the brisk, unrestrained circulation of the intellectual life of the family.

“ For only such books as enrich the understanding and give themes and occasion for profitable conversation and thought should be taken : a wide range must be given in the choice of them, with liberty to interrupt the reader in a seasonable manner. Liberty of interruption must indeed always be stipulated

for in family readings ; questions and conversation favour intellectual digestion.

“ In cities, they must be the latest, the *noised* books of the season, which one must be prepared to talk about in society. In the country, books on the shelves, volumes bound and lettered, can take their turn of friendly and appreciative notice.”

We can fancy the Taylors in lively wonder over Captain Cook, Mungo Park, and Dr. Johnson in the Hebrides ; while Smollett’s fifteen octavoes was a stock-book of English history constantly resorted to in dearth of fresher or more attractive material.

“ And my inference is,” Isaac Taylor says, “ that if the daughters of a family have had the advantage of thus listening to the best samples of our literature, past and recent, they will probably have surpassed their brothers in that sort of intelligence which is the best fruit of education, and which brings with it taste, refinement, and at the least a good preparation for further acquirements.”

What new friendships were formed in Colchester ?

The Taylors seem to have had no taste, or perhaps time, for general society. But an intimacy sprang up between them and the family of Dr. Stapleton, whose four beautiful daughters were distinguished alike for personal charms and mental endowments.

Here Jane and her sister for a time found congenial friends.

A literary club was formed by these young persons, where the productions of their pens, in essays, stories, poems, were contributed, to be read and criticised by the members. Though Jane was the youngest, distrustful of her ability, and shy of all notice, she was always ready for the part assigned her, and prized every opportunity of seeing and amending her faults.

The club indeed had a marked influence in developing her tastes. Her imagination, her delicate observation, and thoughtful habits of mind gave the pen a precedence over the pencil; and though writing was indulged in only in scraps of time snatched from the orderly industries of the day, her articles had a fulness and finish which belonged to riper years.

Effort in this direction might possibly have received little encouragement from her parents. The old prejudice that literary labours dis-qualified a woman for housewifely occupation was then in fashion. "Blue-stocking" was a term of reproach; and Mrs. Taylor must overcome more than her natural reserve before consenting to see her daughters among the literary aspirants of the day. But obstacles are of small moment when gifts and qualifications mark out our sphere and assign us our duties. Our drift in life is not always determined by the approbation of friends or our own selection; and Jane Taylor in the bosom of seclusion was preparing to become one of the clearest and wisest writers of her sex.

Her mother also, in later years, contributed a few volumes to the readers of her day. Indeed, the "Family Pen" bears witness to the literary activity of this gifted family.

At an early age the instructions of pious parents did not fall unheeded upon Jane. She heard and laid up their words in her heart, and pondered them over, and strove to regulate her feelings and conduct by them. At fourteen

there are records of her sense of the supreme importance of religious things.

The great spiritual conflict between good and evil which discloses itself to our consciousness with the earliest desires after a higher life, Jane entered upon, and found only incompleteness and failure.

“Oh,” she says, “it is hard fighting in our own strength against the evil bias of the heart and external enemies. Their united forces are, I am daily more convinced, far too much for anything but grace to overcome. No good resolutions, no efforts of reason, no desire to please, can alone succeed: they may varnish the character; but oh, how insufficient are all such motives for the trying occasions of common life. I would shine most at home; yet I would not be good for the sake of shining, but for its own sake; and when I thus trace the subject to first principles, I find a change of heart can alone effect what I desire—that ‘new heart and that right spirit’ which are the gift of God.”

To a young friend she wrote: “I speak from experience, when I say how much benefit

you receive from communicating your feelings to your dear mother. Well do I know how difficult it is; yet the good to be gained is well worth the effort. You say she is a total stranger to your feelings. If, then, you consider the pleasure it would afford her to find you seriously inquiring on such subjects, I think you will feel it to be an additional argument for the disclosure. Two or three years ago my mind was in a state of extreme depression: for months I had been conflicting with the most distressing fears, and longing to disburden myself to my father. At last I could no longer support myself, and breaking through what I had thought insurmountable difficulties, I opened my mind to him completely. It was a struggle; but the immediate relief I experienced fully repaid me, and the unspeakable benefit I have derived from the conversations I have since from time to time held with him, encourage me to persevere.....

"Mr. Cecil was very urgent with me not to give way to that unhappy reluctance to converse on religious subjects so common to young persons. If I understand you aright, you are

giving way to discontent as to your outward circumstances. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness,' and it is not for me to say you *are* happy; yet from all I know of you, your *friends, circumstances, and prospects*, you are one of the last persons whose situation would excite my commiseration. When I feel disposed to indulge discontent or fretfulness, which, alas! is sometimes the case, I always find it a good way to compare myself with the thousands who are exposed to the miseries of poverty and want—miseries which I never knew, and in the absence of which I invent calamities which the smallest exposure to those *real* ones would presently put to flight. But these reflections, consolatory as they may be, will not always avail to restore our comfort. Discontent, no doubt, much oftener springs from internal causes than immediately from those that are external: with affectionate friends, affluent circumstances, and while in the possession of all the world calls good, one may be very miserable. Happiness is very much in our own power, for it depends much more upon what we are than upon what we *have*. But now I

cannot help laughing at myself; for at this instant, while recommending contentedness to you, I am indulging an internal murmur, and vexing at what I ought to account a trifle: so much easier is it to talk or to write than to act."

## CHAPTER III.

### FAMILY SCENES.

N the autumn of 1802 Jane visited London, the first time since she left it a little child. A delightful circle of friends and relatives welcomed her, and she found what her Colchester associates had lacked—religious culture blended with their social refinement. The visit increased her religious thoughtfulness, and led her to feel more than ever that, beautiful as this life was, neither its beauty nor its engagements could satisfy the soul's deepest needs.

Anne had already found her way to the pages of a youth's magazine called the *Minor's Pocketbook*. With some misgivings Jane followed her sister, and the "Beggar Boy" appeared; a small poem, which attracted

sufficient notice to encourage further effort. The publishers sought the sisters out, and bespoke a book. The result was "Original Poems for Infant Minds," the delight of both parents and children from that time to this. With the renowned melodies of Mother Goose, they formed the chief capital of nursery literature in the last generation; nor have the fertile pens of the present day been altogether able to supplant them.

"Original Poems" was quickly reprinted in America, and translated into Dutch and German; and such was its sudden and well-merited popularity, that another volume was immediately asked for.

The minister and his wife were naturally pleased by this unlooked-for success of their daughters; and the reception of their first earnings, ten pounds, was full of that proud and joyful excitement which belongs, and can only belong, to first things.

During the autumn of 1803 and the following winter, the eastern and southern coasts of England were kept in perpetual agitation by the threatening attitude of France. Invasion was

feared, and troops were kept in readiness at different points for instant use. Since Colchester was one of the chief military stations, a sense of impending danger, of course, filled the air. Every day rumour whispered fresh fears, and strong probabilities were entertained that this might be the scene of earliest conflict. Several families left town, and others prepared to do so at the shortest notice.

Mr. Taylor still owned his house at Lavenham ; and it being then unoccupied, it was deemed safe, at least, to send a part of the family thither, in order to have a home in readiness for more complete removal. Jane, in charge of two brothers and a little sister, led the anticipated exodus. Twice a week, a waggon of cumbrous bulk dragged its weary way through the muddy lanes of Suffolk, from Colchester to Lavenham ; and into this Jane and her charge, with packages not a few, were stowed away.

“ And a sorry journey we had of it,” she writes home ; “ upwards of twenty inside, and each woman had a young child. But what we suffered with heat, smells, and bad language

during the day was nothing to what we suffered when night came—the road bad, the waggon so loaded that we expected to break down, and the horses so tired that we could scarcely get on. The drivers were frightened, and you may be sure the passengers were. However, at half-past nine we arrived at Mr. Langley's door,—for they would not drive to ours,—and we found them waiting for us with much anxiety and more kindness. They would not hear to our going home that night, and had prepared beds for us. Our coming has excited much surprise and more alarm. We have been this morning and seen everything safely unpacked at our house. The little parlour with a nice fire, though unfurnished, looks very comfortable, and we are quite in good spirits.

“Our garden is a wild paradise. What noble willows!”

A few days later she writes: “I sit down to charm you, my dear mother, with an account of the kindness of our friends; but first I will tell you, for your comfort, that all the china is safely unpacked and locked up in the buffet. We came directly after breakfast, and arranged

everything comfortably. Mr. Hickman called about eleven, walked round the garden, and directed us how to manage it; and then we had a little consultation as to how to open the little parlour shutter, which, by dint of hammers and screw-drivers, was effected; and no sooner was it done than we beheld what I think must have been a million of flies, that, I suppose, having heard of Napoleon's intentions, had, like ourselves, taken up their winter-quarters here. We consulted with Mr. Hickman on the propriety of having anybody in the house; but he says there is no need, that there is no such thing as housebreaking in Lavenham. He only remembers one instance, many years ago, at Langley; and then, the man being hanged, so much terror was excited that no one has ventured since in the same line. Isaac thinks Lavenham very desolate; but he is much pleased with the house, and charmed with the Hickmans.

"They are much pleased with the children, who behave very well. They have a high idea, they say, of your method of managing a family. Everybody treats us with great atten-

tion ; nobody laughs at us for coming ; most think it quite right. Our letter excited much alarm ; everybody has heard of it. The people, by their inquiries, seem to think we have been admitted to Bonaparte's privy council."

"*LAVENHAM, October 18, 1803.*

"**MY DEAR MOTHER**,—We have safely received your parcels and letters, which were very acceptable to us. I am now quite comfortably settled in my new house, and feel as if I had taken up my station here for a constancy. I manage capitally, as you may suppose, and 'give satisfaction.' I rise (I am sorry I cannot use the plural number) between six and seven, and get everything in order before breakfast ; but, with all my endeavours, I cannot begin engraving before eleven, to which I sit down again half an hour after dinner. We keep school very regularly, and Jemima comes on both in reading and work. As to economy, I study it as much as possible ; and for our employments, they are certainly broken in upon at present, but will be less and less so as we get more settled. We have not indulged in one walk yet, though the country and weather

have been beautifully inviting ; but we sit at the bow-window next the garden and quite enjoy ourselves."

A letter from Mrs. Taylor lets us into the motherly heart :—

" **My SWEET DARLINGS**,—Your epistle received last night was truly refreshing. It gratified us in so many points that we read it twice over, and it is now on the road to London to gratify our dear friends there. Your management is unexceptionable—is admirable, save in one point ; and now I am going to scold you most heartily. You *boast* that you have not taken one walk since you have been there. More shame for you. I wonder you dared mention such a thing. No exercise ! Perhaps you will say *you* have enough with household affairs ; but where is Isaac's ? where is the children's ? Shame on you ! Your father is quite surprised at it, and desires me to say that he expects you to walk every day, when the weather will permit, for an hour. See also that the children run in the garden. Are they good ?

"I am *very* sorry it is not in my power to send you a seed-cake; but Tuesday, when we could have baked, we could get no yeast; yesterday, you know, was fast-day; we cannot therefore bake till to-morrow. I promise to send you one next week. As for the linen, by all means have it washed at Lavenham. Send me home everything that wants mending; pray let nothing get out of repair, but send everything home at once.

"And now for news. All here is perfectly quiet, and still no *thinking* people at all doubt our being invaded; but as to their success, there are different opinions. The foolish and uninformed, who you know in Colchester form by far the greatest part, now laugh at the late alarm, laugh at those who left town, laugh at General Craig, laugh at *everything*, and think all as safe and secure as if they were in the garden of Eden. Sure this is not one of those awful still calms before a violent storm; certain it is General Craig is still indefatigable in spite of all laughing. The butter market is being walled up to make a guard-house, and everything goes on with the utmost vigour. Yester-

day was the fast. The volunteers, mayor, &c., all went to St. James's to hear Mr. Round, who preached from the Maccabees! Your father entered, for the first time in his life, most seriously and earnestly into the spirit of the fast. He took one half-round of toast for breakfast, and no dinner; I took no breakfast, save half a pint of water, and a very little dinner; no cloth laid; and Martin and Kitty very compliant. Your father and Martin went to meeting in the morning; in the afternoon we read and prayed at home; and in the evening had a lecture in our old place. I chose the text; it was this, David's words to Goliath of Gath: 'Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.' It was a wonderful discourse. The people came about your father in the vestry, and begged him to have it printed, several of them saying they would give five shillings towards the expense.

"I had intended to send you the other three chairs, but Gosling cannot take them. I will,

however, try him with the little parlour carpet. Your dear father set off this morning for London with Mrs. Stapleton and the two girls: so here I am all alone; but God, who always gives strength for the day, supports my spirits wonderfully. I am tolerable in health, and Martin is very good. When your father returns, unless things should very much alter for the better, his intention is to send you more and more of his weekly property, and after the wash I propose with Martin to pay you a visit for a week or two. Our dear Anne shall also pay you a visit; for we see no likelihood of your quitting your station all the winter. As for the kindness of your friends, we cannot say enough to express our gratitude. God bless them all, and you, my dear, dutiful children, the comforts of my life, the solace of my heart. Farewell all.

ANN TAYLOR."

"Thank you for the carpet," replies Jane; "it is quite a luxury to us. Although we brought everything absolutely necessary, we have few conveniences; and though, if we were all huddled together in a barn, expecting

the French to overtake us every instant, we might be very well contented with

An open broken elbow chair,  
A caudle cup without an ear,' &c.,

yet, living quietly, like our neighbours, we rather miss the conveniences we have been used to. I must confess we did not *fast* on the fast-day; we went, however, in the morning to the prayer-meeting, where we heard an excellent prayer from Mr. ——, of three-quarters of an hour. Its length spoiled it, for we were all ready to faint. In the afternoon we walked with the children. I thank you and father for what you say about walking; but really we seem very little to need more exercise than we have in the house and garden, where the children play continually. If we take a walk once or twice a week, just to look at the old places and show the children the new ones, it is quite sufficient."

Towards the close of her stay at Lavenham Jane writes to her mother: "Could you see us just now, I cannot tell whether you would most laugh at or pity us. I am sitting in the middle of the room, surrounded with beds,

chairs, tables, boxes, &c., and every room is the same ; but our brains are in still greater confusion, not knowing now what to do. Have you heard this new alarm ? It is said the French are actually embarking. Mr. —— strongly advises us not to move till we hear something more, so we are quite perplexed. We have at length resolved to wait, at all events till Saturday ; and if you write by return of post, we shall be able to act then according to your wishes. But in the meantime we shall be in a most delightful plight, for most of the things are packed up, ready to go to-morrow ; and then if, after all, we must stay, it will be vexatious enough. If you find there is no foundation for the alarm, you will, of course, order us home directly. But do not fail to write, for we are quite deplorable."

All fears from this quarter having at length subsided, Jane and her charge returned to Colchester, and by February the family were re-united under the home roof.

## CHAPTER IV.

### FRIENDSHIPS.

“  HE more I see of myself and of the performances of others, the more I am convinced nature never intended me for an *artist*,” Jane says. She therefore relinquished engraving with little regret when other engagements opened before her.

A second volume of original poems was followed by “Rhymes for the Nursery,” the joint work of both sisters, whose sweet lullabies have not lost their hold on young hearts, since we find them, illustrated with all the attractions of modern art, bravely holding their own among the innumerable host which besiege the nurseries of our day.

Writing to a friend, she thus describes the

favouring circumstances under which they were written :—

“ My verses have certainly one advantage to boast beyond any that ever before escaped from my pen,—that of being composed in my own study. Whether instigated by the sight of your retired literarium, or what, I cannot exactly tell ; but certain it is that one of my first engagements on my return home was to fit up an unoccupied attic, hitherto devoted only to household lumber. This I removed by the most spirited exertions, and supplied its place with all the apparatus necessary for a poet, which, you know, is not of a very extensive nature,—a few book-shelves, a table for my writing-desk, one chair for myself, and another for my muse, is a pretty accurate inventory of my furniture. But though my study cannot boast the elegance of yours, it possesses one advantage which, as a poet, you ought to allow surpasses them all,—it commands a view of the country—the only room in the house, except one, which is thus favoured ; and to me this is invaluable. You may now expect me to do wonders. But even

if others should derive no advantages from this new arrangement, to me, I am sure, they will be numerous. For years I have been longing for such a luxury, and never before had wit enough to think of this convenient place. It will add so much to the comfort of my life, that I can do nothing but congratulate myself upon the happy thought. Although it is morning, and, I must tell you, but little past six, I have half filled this sheet, which capability I attribute chiefly to the sweet fields that are now smiling in vernal beauty before me."

But it was more than a workshop. It became an inner sanctuary—"her closet," where devotional habits were strengthened and cultivated, and with them that thorough and honest self-inspection which always carefully guarded and guided her spiritual life.

"Those who are in the habit of reading their own hearts," she says, "know that the heart may be as devotedly fixed on what is in itself a truly worthy and proper object of regard as on the sinful vanities of the world; and if that object be anything but God, its intrinsic value

diminishes nothing from the idolatry of the feeling. Perhaps I need not blush for those things on which my heart is most intent; but I ought to blush, could I disclose the monopolizing place which they hold there. They reign. When will these idols fall before God?"

Nor should we ever forget that the best objects may be idolatrously pursued. Even "doing good" is beset with snares. How can we otherwise account for the dwarfed and knarled quality of character which sometimes suddenly startles us in a man or woman long associated with some noble work, save that God was left out, and it came, perhaps unconsciously, to be sought instead; and so were lost that enlargement, richness, and flavour which the soul must ever get from having God supremely there, and his work subordinate to his Spirit.

Dr. Stapleton, who welcomed the Taylors to Colchester, suddenly died in the prime of his usefulness—a loss to all, and especially so to his own family. After his death his brilliant daughters, breaking away from the gentler

restraints of their mother, fell into the fashionable rationalism of the day. Free-thinking was in vogue, and scandals among Christians brought discredit on creeds. They repudiated faith in the Word of God, and enjoyed all the intellectual excitement, the freshness and freedom which emancipation from the "prejudices" of a religious education for a time affords. Consumption entered the family, and one by one swept all away. It swept away also the glittering generalities, which, however they may have animated the hours of health, afforded neither comfort nor support in a path to the grave.

The eldest, entangled more than convinced, in her long illness tried to retrace her steps. Her new instructors could throw no light on the dark future. As her end drew near, she implored her sisters to return to a devout study of the Scriptures, and died praying to be saved in "God's own way."

Their intimacy with the Taylors had naturally declined. Jane continued in friendly correspondence with Eliza, nearest her own age, who, attacked by the same fatal malady,

was journeying from place to place in a fruitless quest of health. At a small inn by the roadside she stopped to rest, but was never able to resume her journey. The extent of her danger flashed upon her; conscience was aroused; the perils of unsettled accounts in the great hereafter filled her with alarm. She felt herself exposed to the penalties of divine law without shelter or excuse. After a long and agonizing conflict, she accepted the "only hope set before us." The Redeemer of lost men became her refuge. Renouncing the sophistries of a Christless system, she lived long enough to rejoice in the promises of salvation, and commend them to others.

"My hope," she said, "is in Christ—in Christ crucified; and I would not give up *that hope* for all the world." The precious and ever-repeated experience of believing trust.

Youth, with its elastic hopes and eager outlooks, did not dissipate the influence which events like these must have on a thoughtful mind, and Jane's character was visibly shaped by them.

The scepticism of her friends had not been

wholly lost on her sensitive nature. Doubts, fears, the sophisms of error, and the difficulties of truth often harassed and perplexed her; and, while they did not materially shake her belief, delayed a clear apprehension of the fulness and sufficiency of atoning love, tinging her early religious life with sadness and distrust.

“ You have well described,” she says to a friend, “ the difficulty, the exertion requisite for real and fervent prayer. I am glad I do know the difference between that and the offering of lifeless petitions. You rightly affirm that true prayer surpasses every other mental exercise, and is certainly beyond human attainment without divine aid. Certainly no one ever prayed who was not a Christian; but though sometimes I have found every faculty for a few moments intently engaged in the exercise, how can I hope that this is really prayer when I remember the indifference, the coldness, the reluctance that characterize the general state of my mind. Yet, in the midst of the darkness which surrounds my own mind, I rejoice, my dear friend, in the light which shines upon yours.”

Her friends, not unaware of the misgivings which clouded her hopes, often vouchsafed their counsel and encouragement.

“With sincere gratitude and love,” writes Jane, “I would thank you again, my dear Anne, for your tender concern in my behalf. Your visit was truly a visit of sunshine; and how sweetly refreshing are such occasional gleams, breaking forth from a cloudy sky! and such indeed is mine. I could bear the roughness of the road, if it were but bright overhead: however, I dare not turn back; and you, dear Anne, while going on your way rejoicing, will not, I am sure, be unmindful of your benighted friend. It may be long before we meet again; but my heart has been accustomed to love the absent, and my thoughts will frequently attend you, laden with sincere affection.”

To another friend she says: “I own, indeed, I do feel a backwardness in introducing these topics, and, as you say, arising from a false shame, it ought not to be encouraged. But I have other impediments; and if I cannot speak with entire freedom on religious subjects, it is

not indeed because I cannot confide in you, but for want of confidence in myself. I dread, much more than total silence, falling into a commonplace, technical style of expression, without real meaning and feeling, and thereby deceiving both myself and others. I well know how ready my friends are to give me encouragement, and hope the best concerning me ; and as I cannot open to them the secret recesses of my heart, they put a too favourable construction on my expressions.

“ Yet I do hope that I have of late seen something of the vanity of the world, and increasingly feel that it cannot be my rest. The companions of my youth are no more; our own domestic circle is breaking up; time seems every day to fly with increased rapidity ; and must I not say, ‘ The world recedes ’ ? Under these impressions I would seek consolation where only I know it is to be found. I long to be able to make heaven and eternity the home of my thoughts, to which, though they must often wander abroad on other concerns, they may regularly return and find their best entertainment. But I always indulge with

fear and self-suspicion in these most interesting contemplations ; and doubtless the enjoyments arising from them belong rather to the advanced Christian than the doubting, wandering beginner. I am afraid I feel poetically rather than piously ; and while I am indulging in vain conjectures on the employments and enjoyments of a future state, I must envy the humble Christian who, with juster views and better claims, is longing to depart and be with Christ.

“ Nor would I mistake a fretful impatience with the fatigues and crosses of life for a temper weaned from the world. I could indeed sometimes say,—

‘ I long to lay this painful head  
And aching heart beneath the soil—  
To slumber in that dreamless bed  
From all my toil.’

And I have felt, too, these lines,—

‘ The bitter tear, the arduous struggle ceases here—  
The doubt, the danger, and the fear,  
All, all for ever o'er.’

But these feelings, though they may afford occasional relief, I could not indulge in.”

Her discernment of the true question at issue in cases like these is not without interest:—

“I cannot think what has given you the idea so strongly that I advocate the theatre, unless it be my going one evening five years ago; and though I am not aware of having sustained any material injury, I have ever since decidedly resolved never to repeat the visit; and I hope you will believe me when I assure you that I disapprove of such amusements, and should think it very dangerous to be in the habit of frequenting them.

“You mention novels. I would as soon read some of Miss Edgeworth’s or Miss Hamilton’s novels, with a view to moral improvement, as Foster’s essays; and I have too high an opinion of your good sense and liberality to suppose that, after a careful perusal of these and some few other good novels (for the number of good ones I readily allow to be very small), you would repeat that ‘to read them was incompatible with love to God.’ You oblige me to recur to a hackneyed argument, that the abuse of a thing should not set aside its use.

“Do not say, then, I am pleading for an

indiscriminate indulgence in novel-reading, or a frequent perusal of the very best of novels ; that, in common with every innocent recreation, may be easily carried to a hurtful excess. But you seem to me to fancy some fatal spell to attend the very name of *novel*, in a way that we should smile at, as narrow-minded and ignorant, in an uneducated person. All I wish you to admit, all I think myself, is that it is a possible thing for a book to be written, bearing the general form, appearance, and name of a *novel*, in the cause of virtue, morality, and religion ; and then, that to read such a book is by no means 'incompatible with love to God,' or in the least displeasing in his sight. I think you will not hesitate to admit this ; and then we exactly agree in our opinions of 'plays and novels.' That plays and bad novels are 'poisons which Satan frequently insinuates' with too great success, I have no more doubt than yourself. Yet, if I am not mistaken, he has some still more potent venoms. If I might judge from myself, there are ways, in the most private life, in domestic scenes, in solitary retirements, by which Satan can as effectually

operate on the heart as in a crowded theatre. I believe I might read a hundred novels, and attend as many plays, and have my heart less drawn from God than by those common pursuits and interests which, while it would be sinful to avoid them, I cannot engage in without sin. It is in the realities of life, and not merely in the fictions that occasionally amuse us, that I find the most baneful poisons, the most effectual weaners from 'love to God.'

"I think many people 'strain at a gnat and swallow a camel' in these very circumstances; and Satan willingly suffers them to abstain from the theatre, or throw aside a novel with abhorrence, if the idol, the real idol he has erected in their hearts, receive its daily worship. You cannot suppose I am bringing this forward by way of argument for the one or the other; but it always appears to me that people begin at the wrong end when they attack such errors as these. One might as well expect to demolish a building by pulling down some external ornament, while the pillars were left unmoved; and I think many who exclaim with vehemence against those who indulge in some of the vain

pleasures of the world, would do well to examine if there be not some favourite idol within their own breasts equally displeasing in the sight of a heart-searching God. I do not say this to you, dear E——. I know you watch your heart as well as your conduct, and earnestly desire to guard it in every quarter from the incursions of the great adversary."

"COLCHESTER, *February 14, 1808.*

"Nothing less, my dear Eliza, than your actual presence would, I believe, just now rouse me from the stupor of a long evening's application. I always grow quite rusty in winter, and almost forget that the world reaches farther than from one end of the house to the other.

"You, who have seen us only in summer, when we are never so regular in our movements, can scarcely form an idea of the retirement and uninterrupted regularity of our winter life. We seem more like the possessors of some lone castle in the bosom of the mountains than the inhabitants of a populous town. I enjoy this retirement, this peaceful and happy home, where my heart and my happiness are

centred. When I look round on the dear and yet unbroken circle, I reproach myself if I have ever indulged a feeling of fretfulness; yet we have troubles and anxieties that will sometimes destroy cheerfulness. But I feel persuaded that, however I may feel their pressure now, I shall never know happier days than these. And one advantage I have—I am still young, and feel that flow of spirits, that bounding joy of heart which always attend the spring of life. The spirits may indeed be depressed, but they will rise again; and I have often been surprised at the joyfulness returning to my heart from no apparent cause, and when circumstances which had plunged me in dejection remained unchanged.

“But this is not all.” Jane says as to motives: “He who searches the heart will not afford me strength to overcome my temper unless he sees a right motive urging me to attempt it. If I wish to be amiable for the same reason that I might wish to be accomplished or beautiful—that is, that I may be admired, or loved, or respected—can I hope for success? Oh no. If I be not actuated by a

humble desire to obey the commands of God, and follow the bright example of Jesus Christ, by a *hatred of all* that is sinful, and an ardent desire to be ‘holy, as he is holy,’ I must still strive and pray in vain. How does this increase the difficulty of the work, and show the absolute necessity of divine help! Not that I think a modest wish to please can be sinful; indeed, without it how can we ever expect to please? but this must not be the spring of action, unless we prefer the approbation of friends to the favour of God.”

“**MY DEAR LUCK**,” she writes to a London friend, Sarah L. Condor, “Much as I love London for the friends it contains, I think my delight in country scenery increases every year; and while I occasionally cast a wistful look towards places where I feel a heart interest, yet, when I contrast smoke, noise, and darkness with the smiling landscape and clear sky, and all the beauties of a country walk, which is here always within reach, I forget my privations of other kinds, and acknowledge that my lines have fallen to me in pleasant places.

"That I have an eye to see and a heart to feel the beauties of nature, I cannot feel too thankful for, because they afford me constant and unsatiating pleasure, and form almost my only recreation; and I trust that, having acquired a love for these simple enjoyments, I shall never lose it, but that in seasons of solitude and of sorrow I shall continue to find a sweet solace in them. When I am in low spirits, weary, or cross, one glance at the landscape from the window of my attic never fails to produce a salutary effect on me. And when 'tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more,' if moon, planet, or star descend to beam through my casement, I retire under its benign influence. To a Londoner I might apologize for dwelling on such a theme, but to a poet I cannot; and though to a correspondent I ought to apologize for so much egotism, to a friend I need not."

"You ask me to define a compliment," writes Jane to Josiah Condor, Luck's brother. "I thought we had agreed that praise bestowed upon real merit by the honest judgment, and administered temperately, ought not to be

termed a *compliment*. Whenever praise exceeds these limits, it deserves no better name. But I fear, unless we have courage to violate the common laws of good-breeding, we must all confess ourselves faulty in this respect. Indeed, it seems to depend more upon the character of our associates than upon ourselves to what degree we offend. I have friends whom I cannot compliment; and I have acquaintances whom, unless I transgress these laws, I must need compliment whenever I am in their company. In this view, if I have accused you of such a practice, I am willing to take the blame upon myself; and I will consider myself bound, for your sake as well as for my own, better to merit these commendations which neither your politeness could entirely withhold, nor my vanity wholly dispense with. It is difficult to distinguish accurately between an honest desire to please and that poisonous love of admiration which acts rather as a clog than a stimulus to mental improvement—to judge between a laudable ambition to excel and a vain and selfish desire to outshine others. A proud indifference to the opinion of the world is no

amiable feeling ; but to be independent of its smiles, by valuing chiefly the sweets of inward tranquillity, is indeed a most desirable state of mind, only to be attained by cultivating the best principles and by seeking approbation from the highest source."

In relation to her religious perplexities, "Prayer," she says, "is to me so difficult a task, that when I have performed it with any degree of correctness, I rise from my knees exhausted in mind and body ; every power is on the full stretch to gain a glimpse of Him whom I desire to see, to realize His presence and even His existence ; and if I relax for a moment, then all is lost, and I seem to be addressing a shadow : indeed, I fear that I never did address a single petition or direct a single thought to God. Do you know what I mean by saying that my prayers seem to fall short of the object to whom I would offer them ?

"Nor can I describe the perplexity with which my mind is entangled whenever I try to direct a thought towards the Saviour : I feel no powers capable of viewing or even

thinking of him ; and though I am interested whenever I hear or read his name, and feel encouraged and affected when I meet with the free and gracious invitations and promises of the gospel, yet when I attempt to apply them, they seem to lose their value and importance. If I did but feel sin to be a burden, surely I should soon learn to fly to Him who alone could release me from it. But this is my misery : *I do not see the evil of sin* ; and though I know myself to be in cruel bondage to it, yet my chains do not gall me ; and with my eyes open, the Word of God before me, *knowing* everything, but *feeling* nothing, I am afraid I shall never have other views. It seems *impossible* that so great a change can take place in *me*.

“ Were anything less than the welfare of my soul concerned, I should hesitate to trouble you so often with the detail of my fears and difficulties ; but it is my life, and I cannot refrain. The knowledge that your disease—in some respects *similar* to my own—has been so completely cured, has awakened a hope which has encouraged me to persevere, when I believe I

should otherwise have given over; and you have instructed me in the way."

To those struggling in the same conflict the assurance that *in holding on* there is final victory is emphasized in the life of Jane Taylor.

Her brother Isaac in after-years characterized her early intimacies and instructions by "Christianized intellectualism," in which, no doubt, "the sure foundation," Christ's finished work, was not set forth with that clearness and directness with which she afterwards saw and apprehended it.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE FIRST BREAK.

HE sad excitement of the first break in the family circle began to agitate this quiet home when Isaac and Martin were of age to go out and find what life had for them to do; and it weighed on Jane as it must ever weigh on a thoughtful and loving nature.

In a letter to "dear Luck," in May 1809, she opens thus her heart:—

"This letter was begun some time ago. Many things have prevented my finishing it; and I have been in a state of anxiety about the settlement of —, which has so much occupied my thoughts that I have not had the heart to resume my pen. His affairs are yet undecided, and we are waiting very anxiously to see what

is the will of Providence concerning him. When I remember how kindly our heavenly Father has hitherto led us as a family, in credit and comfort, through so many struggles, I feel a sweet consolation in committing all our temporal affairs to him, and hope that my dear brothers, for whose welfare we feel unspeakable solicitude, may be guided by that 'pillar of cloud and of fire' by which we have been so far directed. Yet again, when I see that many a one, equally deserving and equally dear to parents and sisters, becomes a prey to misfortunes, and encounters in life nothing but neglects and disappointments, how can I be sure this may not be the case with my dear brothers ?

" Dear Luck, you would pity me if you knew the many tears I have shed over these forebodings ; but all this is foolish and wrong. I do try cheerfully to commit them to God, and hope I may be able to say with some submission, whatever be their fate, ' Thy will be done.' The separation which now draws so near I hardly know how to fortify myself to bear ; for though the distance is short, and our inter-

views may be frequent, yet I must view it as the breaking up of our family, so long and so closely united, and a part of it so dear to us leaving *home*—safe, happy, affectionate home—for ever. Excuse me, dear Luck; my heart is very full on this subject, and in writing to a friend I could not avoid it.

“Oh, when the mind is weary and heavily laden with these worldly cares, how refreshing it is to look beyond them all to that rest, to those happy, peaceful mansions that are prepared for the people of God. The delightful hope of seeing all my dear family and all I love below safely landed there makes these fears and anxieties fade into insignificance. But oh, what new fears and anxieties arise here! It may be well that our minds are not capable of measuring the vast disproportion between the concerns of this life and those of eternity, or we should not be able to give a sufficient degree of attention to our present duties. Could we view the most important events that can ever occur to us here in the same light as we shall look back upon them from the other world, we should scarcely be

able to exert a proper degree of energy in the pursuit or management of them."

The brothers went to London; engraving still; and painful as this parting was in anticipation, their absence, when it came, flooded her with those sorrowful forebodings which every dear old home has felt when its sons go out from its sheltering love.

"I regard this separation as one of the greatest sorrows I have known," she says. "I cannot view it merely as a parting with a friend whom I may hope to meet again in a few months: for though our interviews may be frequent, our separation as companions is final; we are to travel different roads; and all the time we may actually pass together in the course of occasional meetings, in our whole future lives, may not amount to more than a year or two of constant intercourse."

In a letter written to her brothers during this separation, she says: "Oh, this cruel separation! It would have killed me to have known, when we first parted, how complete it would be. I am glad we deceived ourselves with the hope of keeping up frequent inter-

course by letters and visits ; it saved us a severer pang than any we then endured. These painful reflections are revived by the disappointment of our fond hopes of a speedy reunion, which is now rendered not only distant, but very doubtful. You, engaged in business and surrounded with friends, cannot feel as we do on this subject. We have nothing to do but to contemplate our cheerless prospects, or to think of the days that are past. I do not mean it reproachfully when I say that you will soon learn to do without us ; it is the natural consequence of your situation, and we ought to be reconciled to the 'common lot.' But how can I forget the happy years in which we were everything to each other ? I am sometimes half jealous of our friends, especially of ——, who now has that confidence which we once enjoyed. But I will not proceed in this mournful strain. And do not think, my dear brothers, that I am charging you with neglect or any decrease of affection ; though I do sometimes anticipate, and that with bitter regret, the natural effect of a long-continued separation.

“ We have not yet tried separation long enough to know what its effects will eventually be. I dread lest, in time, we should be so accustomed to it as to feel contented to live apart, and forget the pleasure of our former intercourse ; and I cannot suffer myself to believe what, after all, is most probable, that we never shall be united again. It is a forlorn idea ; for what will two or three flying visits in the course of a year amount to ? Life is short, and we are perhaps half-way through it already. Well, I ought to be thankful that so large a portion of it we have passed in company, and that the best part too. As to the future, if I could be sure that years of separation would not in the least estrange our love, I would strive to be content ; but the idea of becoming such brothers and sisters as we see everywhere is incomparably more painful than that of a final banishment, in which we should love each other as we now do.”

No such assurance, alas ! can be given.

Happily a new literary enterprise helped to divert Jane’s mind from its sad regrets. A volume of poems was projected by some of her

London friends, in which she was persuaded to take part. Consenting with her usual distrust, she gained courage by her humility.

“Since I have had time to think soberly about the ‘Wreath,’ ” she says,—“for this must be its title,—I have felt far less anxious about the share I am to have in it. Now I am not going to tease you with any of my ‘morbid humility,’ for I am as weary of it and as angry with it as you are; but I must just tell you how it affects me. I think I know pretty well how to estimate my poetical talent; at least, I am perfectly persuaded I do not *under-rate* it; and in comparison with my blooming companions in this garland, I allow my pieces to rank as the leaves—which are, you know, always reckoned a necessary and even pleasing part of a bouquet. And I may add that I am not only contented, but pleased with this station. It is safe and snug, and my chief anxiety is not to suffer anything ridiculous or very lame to appear. With these views I consent. The opinion of the little hallowed circle of my own private friends is more to me than the applauses of a world of strangers. To

them my pieces are already known ; by them their merits and their faults are already determined ; and if they continue to smile kindly upon my simple Muse, she will not, I think, easily be put in ill-humour."

The book came to light under the name of "The Associate Minstrels," which the Christmas greetings of 1810 placed upon many a parlour table of that day.

Jane Taylor up to this time had chiefly written for her own amusement, the spontaneous expression of feelings whose natural outlet seemed to be the pen. A conviction that she had a talent to be used for service, began now to dawn upon her,—work for the Master, usefulness,—and with this deeper sense of accountability for the written word her writings grew in earnestness and vigour.

Under this new stimulus, in connection with her sister Anne, "Hymns for Infant Minds" were composed, supplying a want then deeply felt by the religious teachers of the young.

Dr. Watts' "Divine Songs" was almost the only book of the kind, and a pioneer the sisters hardly dared follow. Yet, as excellence serves

to inspire rather than discourage, the popularity of Dr. Watts, disclosing as it did a real need, animated their exertions ; and though nothing perhaps will ever quite equal the charming simplicity and truthfulness of " Busy Bee " and " The Cradle Song," " Hymns for Infant Minds " became permanent stock in juvenile literature, and multitudes of little ones, wherever the English language is spoken, have been taught their first lessons in God and his truth through its sweet and attractive numbers.

" I think," says Jane, " I have some idea of what a child's hymn ought to be ; and when I commenced the task, it was with the presumptuous determination that none of them should fall short of the standard I had formed in my mind. In order to this, my method was to shut my eyes and imagine the presence of some pretty little mortal, and then endeavour to catch, as it were, the very language it would use on the subject before me. If in any instances I have succeeded, to this little imaginary being I should attribute my success. And I have failed so frequently because so frequently I was compelled to say, ' Now you

may go, my dear ; I shall finish the hymn myself.' "

It cost the sisters more real work than anything they had written. Some of the hymns were written and re-written over and over again, without even then satisfying their ideal of what a child's hymn should be, to answer all the conditions of sense, shortness, and simplicity.

It was a work, however, well-pleasing to Jane, since no expectations of literary distinction came in to jar her desire for doing good and nothing more.

A letter to Mrs. Taylor, away from home, lets us into the happy excitement which occasionally stirs up the quiet of an author's home :—

" **MY DEAR MOTHER**,—A parcel has at length arrived, and I sit down immediately, according to promise, to communicate its principal contents ; though I tell you beforehand, that you may not be disappointed, there is no particular news on the subject which most interests us.

" I will now proceed to make extracts from

the letters we have received. The parcel contained the sheet of hymns, and letters from Josiah, Isaac, Martin, Luck, Susette, Emma, Sarah, *Professor Smythe* of Cambridge, Walter Scott, and our dear James Montgomery."

After making the extracts, both appreciative and encouraging, she concludes:—

"And now, dear mother, you have had the best of the juice. I have written in a wild hurry. We have no fresh news of any sort. Indeed, this might content you.—Your affectionate

JANE."

Towards the close of this year Mr. Taylor resigned his parish, and the family were for some months uncertain what their future destination might be.

"It is a strange sensation," wrote Jane to a friend, "to survey the map of England, without an idea as to what part of it we are to occupy. Yet perhaps we feel less anxiety about it than you suppose. Not to be farther removed from London than we now are is our chief solicitude, and to be nearer would be very desirable; more so on account of being able to see our dear brothers more frequently. For my own

part, might I choose a situation, it would be a very retired one, among plain, good people, whom we could love,—a village, not a town. My love of quiet and retirement daily increases, and I wish to cultivate this taste ; it suits me, and does me good. To part with our house here, the high woods and the springs, will cost me a struggle ; and more especially my dear, quiet attic. Might I hope to find such another in our next encampment I should be less uneasy.

“ I am looking forward with the greatest pleasure to your promised visit. Nor will I allow, dearest L——, that even if it were to happen at the time of our expected family meeting you would be thought an intruder. Indeed, I must say that, if ever we regarded any friends with that kind of confidence and affection which is current in one’s own family, you and S—— may claim that distinction. Perhaps you may be the last visitor we may receive at Colchester. It does seem at last as if some important changes must take place in our family. Our dear brothers’ leaving us was the first signal, though we did not then per-

ceive it. From that hour we might have bid adieu to the many uninterrupted years of quiet family happiness with which we have been indulged. Yet I am well persuaded it is all for our good."

"To JOSIAH CONDOE.

"COLCHESTER, April 1811.

"In the present unsettled and uncertain state of our family affairs, you may perhaps imagine that I am able to think and write of little else; but I am indeed surprised to find so little perturbation occasioned by them. There was a time when such events would have excited strong emotions of interest and anxiety, and when I could not have believed that I should ever contemplate such changes with composure; but now I have lived long enough to feel assured that life is life everywhere, and that no material augmentation of happiness is to be expected from any external sources. Care, I know, will both follow and meet me wherever I may go—even should I be transplanted from this cheerless desert into the bosom of my dearest friends. Friendship, far from its availings to shield us from the shafts of care, does but

render us vulnerable in a thousand points. Yet, notwithstanding many anticipated troubles, there are times when I regard the possibility of a reunion with my dear brothers, and of joining the beloved circle from which we have hitherto been banished, with feelings of real delight. But our future destination is still so uncertain, that we have no distinct feeling or very decided wish on the subject. When the idea of our leaving Colchester was first started, I desired nothing so much as a still more retired situation ; I longed for the seclusion and tranquillity of an insulated village. A few months, however, have produced a great change in my views, if not in my wishes. Yet I believe it would be but too easy, even now, to persuade me to relinquish other projects, fraught as they are with anxiety and danger, to take refuge in some 'holy shade,' where I might welcome that 'silence, peace, and quiet' for which I feel my heart and soul are made.

" Though the harassing circumstances of the last year have driven poetry and its smiling train far from my thoughts, yet I am not forgetful of the kindness which prompted you to

speak a word of cheer to a fainting muse. I know I cannot better thank you for your excellent but long-neglected letter than by saying it has fully answered the kind intention of the writer. What do you say, then, to my being quite convinced? Shall I tell you that I am thoroughly satisfied with my talents and attainments, and feel an agreeable confidence in my own powers? and that however injured by envious contemporaries, I am convinced that posterity will do me justice? Do not you believe it? Well, then, shall I tell a more probable story, and say that, in this respect at least, I have learned to be content with such things as I have, and that I have in some degree subdued that unworthy ambition which exposes one to mortification and discontent? Fatiguing and sickening is the struggle of competition. I desire to withdraw from the lists. But if this be all, you may still think your friendly endeavours were unavailing. You did not, I am sure, expect that your letter would make any material alteration in my opinions and feelings; yet it was cheering and encouraging. I assure you I felt it so, and therefore

you will not think your pains unrewarded. As a source of harmless, perhaps even salutary pleasure to myself, I would not totally despise or check the poetical talent, such as it is; but it would be difficult to convince me that the world would have been any loser had I never written verses—such, I mean, as were composed solely for my own pleasure. I do, however, set a much higher value on that poetical taste, or rather feeling, so far as I have it, which is quite distinct from the capability of writing verse, and also from what is generally understood when people say they are *very fond of poetry*. But while I desire ever to cherish the poetical *taste*, I own it appears to me to be as little my duty as my interest to cultivate the *talent* for poetry. With different sentiments I am compelled to regard my own share in what we have published for children. The possibility of their fulfilling in any degree the end desired gives them importance, and renders future attempts of a similar kind a matter more of duty than of choice. I dare not admit all the encouraging considerations you have suggested; nor can I fully explain what I feel on the sub-

ject. That 'such reflections are not of a nature to inspire vanity,' is true indeed. No, I desire to be humbled by the thought; a consciousness of unworthiness makes it hard for me to indulge the hope of being instrumental of the smallest good."

"Having a leisure evening, the last probably before our removal, I devote it to fulfilling my promise to write you once more from Colchester. Yes, we are really going, and in a few days the place that has so long known us shall know us no more. Before I quit the scene of the varied interests of my childhood and youth, I ought to give my mind a long leave of absence, and send it back leisurely to revisit the past; but in the hurry of the moment the feeling of it is lost. And even if I could afford to send my thoughts on this retrograde excursion, I ought not to ask you to accompany them; for they would stay to contemplate scenes and gaze on faces unknown and uninteresting to you. I can invite my friends to sympathize in my present interests, and to survey with me my future prospects; but of *that* fairy land they could only discern a line of blue distance;

while to me 'here a cot and there a spire still glitter in the sun.' But a melancholy retrospection is an unprofitable indulgence—a kind of luxury which perhaps I have no right to allow myself. Let me rather, if I have time for contemplation, take a more humbling and painful survey; and, reviewing the sins and follies of childhood and youth, resolutely say: 'The time past of my life shall suffice to have wrought them.' But I want energy to commence a new career. Whether my mind will recover vigour under new circumstances, or will faint under the exertion I have in prospect, remains to be seen: it is a fearful experiment.

"Here I sit in my little room. It looks just as it always did; but in a few days all will be changed, and this consecrated attic will be occupied,—how shall I tell you?—by an *exciseman*; for his wife observed to me, when surveying the house, 'Ah! this room will do nicely for my husband to keep his books in.' Well, I shall take with me all that has rendered it most interesting; and as for the moon and sunshine that will still irradiate its walls, I would not withhold them from my successor."

## CHAPTER VI.

### A WINTER BY THE SEA.

**M**R. TAYLOR received a call from a Dissenting church at Ongar, and the family removed thither, the change gratifying them all in one respect,—it was near London, only twenty miles off, north-east, in the county of Essex.

*“ONGAR, September 23, 1811.*

“MY DEAR E——, This is the first time I have dated from our new habitation. Having at length restored things to something like order, I sit down in my new room to address an old friend. At present I scarcely know where I am or who I am; but now that I find myself at the old favourite station, my writing-desk, and suffering my thoughts and affections to flow in an accustomed channel, I begin to

know myself again. And were it not for this, there are certain cares and troubles bearing my name and arms which will never suffer me long to question my personal identity. It is, however, by a pleasure that I ascertain it this evening; I ought not, therefore, to begin by complaining.

“But, my dear friend, you are looking forward towards a change so much more important than a merely local one, that it may well appear to you comparatively trifling. That you are about to undergo is of all changes the greatest and the most interesting but one; and that one, if brought into comparison, makes even this appear insignificant. A recollection of the certain and speedy termination of every earthly connection is, at such a season, likely rather to tranquillize than to depress the spirits; it is calculated to allay anxiety, not to damp enjoyment. When marriage is regarded as forming a connection for *life*, it appears indeed a tremendous experiment; but in truth it is only choosing a companion for a *short journey*, —yet with this difference, that if the fellow-travellers become greatly endeared to each

other, they have the cheering hope of renewed intercourse and perpetual friendship at their journey's end."

The marked success which attended these sisters in their efforts for the young, made their friends not only suggest but urge their opening a school. The plan had its lights as well as shades; and under their shining Anne and Jane spent the following winter in London, to perfect themselves in some higher accomplishments which had been overlooked or neglected in their early education.

The winter had its pleasures, but obstacles crossed their projects. The school was given up, and the sisters joyfully returned to Ongar in the spring, loving better than anything else the sweet seclusion of their happy home.

Several of Jane's friends entered upon married life at this time, and among them her dear Luck, to whom she thus writes:—

"ONGAR, *March 24, 1812.*

"**MY VERY DEAR LUCK**,—Though in much uncertainty whether this letter will reach you amid the bustle of preparation or after the grand event has taken place, I shall venture to

despatch it, hoping that, under whatever circumstances it may arrive, you will not deem it too great a trespass on your time to receive my kindest wishes and most affectionate farewell. Though I have no apprehension of feeling any diminution of interest and regard towards my friend in a new character, yet I cannot but feel that I am taking leave of a name endeared by many a year of friendly intercourse ; and while most sincerely rejoicing in a change which seems in every respect likely to promote your comfort and happiness, you will forgive me for mingling with my heartfelt congratulations some tears of tender regret. There are no forms of expression—at least I cannot command any—which seem adequate to an occasion like the present. With everything to feel, there seems little to be said. The best wishes are so comprehensive that they occupy but a small space, and the strongest emotions are usually the least eloquent. You have, my dear Luck, my most earnest wishes and prayers for every blessing to attend you in your new and important situation. May you look back upon the trans-

actions of the approaching day with increasing satisfaction and pleasure every future year of your life."

"ONGAR, *May 11, 1818.*

"MY DEAR E——, There is no part of your kind letter more agreeable to me than that which expressed a wish for maintaining a more regular and frequent epistolary intercourse. On this the existence of our friendship must now more than ever depend—at least, without this kind of communication it cannot be either pleasant or profitable. You will give me credit for the sincerity of this declaration, although my apparent inattention might well awaken contrary suspicions, at least in a more recent friendship. But you and I, dear E——, are too old and sober-minded to indulge dreams of cruel neglects and faithless friendships, having, as I believe, entertained a sincere regard for each other for many years; a regard which, though formed in the doubtful ardour of youthful enthusiasm, has healthfully survived those short-lived transports. It is no longer romantic to indulge the hope that the mutual affection will be as per-

manent as it is sincere. I am not indeed insensible to the disadvantageous consequences of an almost total suspension of personal intercourse, and the still more unpropitious effects of an entire dissimilarity of interests and of occupations ; still, I am inclined to believe that there is a peculiar interest attached to the connections formed in childhood or early youth which is not easily lost, and that those who are inseparably united with the history of our *fairy years* may insure a place in the lively and affectionate recollections even of declining age. I have wandered so far from my unfinished apology, that I think you will not wish me to retrace my steps in search of it ; I will therefore only add my sincere wish and intention to atone for past remissness by future regularity.

“ Letter-writing is much more of a task to me than it used to be. Often, when I should enjoy a *tête-à-tête*, to converse on paper with a friend is almost burdensome. I know not whether it is that I am growing old or stupid or lazy, though I rather suspect all three. Seriously, however, I am certainly experiencing some of the disadvantages of increasing years.

With the follies of youth, a portion of its vigour too is fled ; and being deficient in constitutional or mental energy to supply its place, my mind is hanging as limp as a dead leaf. But perhaps, dear E——, you will scarcely thank me for talking of the effects of *years*, in which respect I am so little beforehand with you. I do not, however, ascribe all to the depredations of time: many a gay lady of five-and-forty retains more of youth than I do ; and you, though not a gay lady, will long, I hope, appear a young and lovely wife. So I will take this opportunity to turn to a more pleasing subject, and tell how much I rejoice to hear from yourself how agreeably you are realizing the fair prospects which but lately opened upon you ; and from *others*, with what grace and propriety you occupy the new and important station upon which you have entered. May you long enjoy and adorn it, my dear friend. Earthly happiness—comfort, I should rather say, for I believe the former exists only in the dictionary—is indeed to be prized when it does not interfere with higher pursuits ; and still more so when it tends to assist and stimulate them.

“ The ease and leisure afforded by such a lot as yours is, in this view, highly desirable. It presents the most favourable opportunities of usefulness to others, and to yourself of growing in meetness for the heavenly inheritance. Happy are you, dear E——, that it is your highest ambition thus to improve them. While some are driven through life as over a stormy sea, incessantly tossed and thwarted by the restless billows, till they arrive, faint and weary, at the haven of rest, others are permitted to ramble at leisure through a pleasant vale, till they gradually ascend to the everlasting hills ; and of how little consequence is it by which course we are led, so our wanderings do but terminate in the same blissful country. We all receive that kind of discipline which our peculiar dispositions require ; and if it is severe, we may be sure it is necessary too.”

Isaac, a favourite brother, to whom Jane seems drawn with peculiar tenderness, was out of health. London air and occupations did not agree with him ; and in the following winter he was obliged to seek the milder climate of Devonshire. The two sisters accompanied him.

Ilfracombe, a picturesque town on Bristol Channel, was their winter quarters. But Jane shall describe them, which she does in a letter to Josiah Condor, in November 1812 :—

“ Ilfracombe is situated in a deep valley, surrounded on one side by barren hills, and on the other by stupendous rocks, which skirt the sea. Our lodgings very pleasantly overlook the harbour, which affords us constant entertainment. The sea is close behind the house, and is so near a neighbour that, during the last high tides, the waves rose in immense sheets of foam, and fell over a high wall opposite our chamber windows. It also flowed into the house in front, and kept us close prisoners. Our walks in every direction are so interesting that, when the weather admits, we spend a great part of the day abroad. Our rambles among the rocks I enjoy most, though at first they excited sensations of awe and terror rather than of pleasure ; but now we climb without fear amid a wilderness of rocks, where nothing else can be seen, and nothing heard but the roar of the distant sea. Besides these, we have several cheerful walks commanding the sea,

bounded on the north by a beautiful line of Welsh mountains. Their aspects are very various: at times appearing only like faint clouds in the horizon; but when the weather is clear, and the sun shines upon them, they exhibit an exquisite variety of light and shade and delicate colouring, finished by distance, like the finest miniature.

In a February letter to "Dear father, mother, & Co," she writes:—"The appointed interval of silence being nearly expired, I undertake to despatch another sheet, though with no news to communicate; but as no news is good news, you cannot complain. We have had lately some very mild spring weather, and I often think how pretty the Ongar garden is looking with snow-drops, just as it did this time last year, when we returned from our London expedition. Here we do not see much to denote the change of seasons, as the barren hills and rocks owe little to these variations.

"About a week ago we had some rough weather, and a great deal of thunder and lightning; the first storm since October. The sea was very fine; I only wish I could tell you

how fine. We were called out of bed one morning by the Fortescues to go and see it. The same day we went out among the rocks, and took shelter from an approaching storm in a fine but tremendous cavern. The sea was then rolling like the loudest thunder, the clouds hanging heavily over it, and we expected lightning as well as rain. Nothing could have been finer, if we had not been frightened. At last we set out, in hopes of escaping the storm. Our way home was over perilous fragments of rock, among which we had to scamper at full speed. I got a heavy fall, and sprained my arm. The rain came on in torrents, and we were soaked through.

“ We have been very busy lately helping Mr. Gunn to form a Book Society here. He is soliciting everybody for presents to it. We promised to ask father if he had anything to bestow, thinking he might very well spare a copy of ‘Lowell’s Sermons.’ If he is willing, let it be sent with anything else he does not care for.”

Has Jane written much else besides letters ?

“ As to my employments during the winter,

I have been disappointed in my expectations of writing ; but I have not neglected a favourable opportunity, for none has presented itself. I went to Ilfracombe expecting to find there complete retirement and much leisure. You know how mistaken we were in this calculation. The engagement of the evening with our welcome visitors completely deprived me of the only time I can ever profitably devote to writing. I am far, however, from thinking this a lost winter, or that I have enjoyed a too expensive pleasure ; for I would not but have known and seen what I have at Ilfracombe for twice the expense of time and money. I do, however, look forward with much satisfaction to the prospect of resuming my former habits after this long relaxation ; and whenever I take up the pen again, I hope to reap the advantage of the past winter."

Yet she was impatient under this long-continued inaction :—

“ I have found—but not now for the first time—that any great external interest, for a continuance, will not agree with my mind ; it is living upon dainties instead of plain food.

Accustomed to expect my evening's entertainment from myself, in some kind of mental exertion, a complete relaxation from this, and depending wholly, for many months, on external means of gratification, is a kind of indulgence which will not do to live upon: my mind never had so long a holiday, and I feel it is time to send it home."

Early in the spring of the year 1813 they prepared to leave Ilfracombe, and, in the expectation of doing so, she says:—

"In a week or two we expect to take our leave of Ilfracombe. Thus ends another short chapter of the little history of life. Like many others, its contents have not corresponded with the title. It has disappointed our fears, and greatly exceeded our expectations of enjoyment. May it end with a hymn of praise."

The Taylors seem to have fallen among agreeable people, which in its way is a fine tonic for invalids in search of health. Jane was not, indeed, the invalid; but this interlude from more weighty work improved her general health, enlivened her spirits, and broadened her acquaintance with the world.

Much as the winter was to Jane and Isaac, it brought more important issues to their sister Anne. Some happy article in the *Eclectic Review* found a delighted reader in the Rev. Joseph Gilbert, who, on learning the author's name—Anne Taylor—was anxious to know her. An introduction took place. On this visit to Ilfracombe, the acquaintance ripened into intimacy, and the prospect of a new home for their eldest daughter gladdened and saddened the Taylor household.

This summer was passed at Ongar. The sisters had been more to each other perhaps than sisters often are, since similarity of tastes and a ~~partnership~~ of pursuit and aim ennobled the tie of kindred, and made them congenial as well as loving companions.

A newly-established Sunday school, struggling into life in an outlying hamlet of the town, was a new interest to Jane, and she entered upon its labours with that grave earnestness which marked her growing piety.

In the autumn Isaac's delicate health compelled him again to migrate to milder airs, and a second winter at Ilfracombe was talked

of. Should Jane accompany him? This was a trying question. It was hard to leave Anne in the midst of her bridal preparations—hard, indeed, to leave home at all. But her brother needed both her care and her society, and she cheerfully relinquished her own preferences for his sake. Accordingly, by October Jane and Isaac were again comfortably settled on the borders of the sea.

In December Anne was married to Mr. Gilbert, tutor in the Independent College of Rotherham. The absentees were there in heart.

“I cannot suffer this interesting morning to pass, my dear Anne, without salutations from Ilfracombe: and I dare say this letter will arrive in good company; but I am sure no one will address you who can feel on this occasion either so glad or so sorry as I do. So far as you are concerned, I am entirely glad, and feel as perfectly satisfied and happy as one can be about untried circumstances. But I cannot forget that this morning, which forms one indissoluble partnership, dissolves another which we had almost considered so. From the early

days of 'Moll and Bet' down to these last times we have been more inseparable companions than sisters usually are ; and our pursuits and interests have been the same. My thoughts of late have often wandered back to those distant years, and passed over the varied scenes which checkered our childhood and youth. There is scarcely a recollection in all that long period in which we are not mutually concerned and equally interested. If this separation had taken place ten years ago, we might by this time have been in some degree estranged from each other ; but having passed so large and important a portion of life in such intimate union, I think we may confidently say it never will be so. For brothers and sisters to separate is the common lot ; for their affection and interest to remain unabated is not common, but I am sure it is possible ; and I think the experience we have already had proves that we may expect its continuance. Farewell, my dear Anne ! and in this emphatical farewell I would comprehend all the wishes, the prayers, the love, the joy, and the sorrow which it would be so difficult to express in

more words. If there is a dash of bitterness in the grief with which I bid you farewell, it is only from the recollection that I have not been to you the sister I might have been. My feelings have been so strongly excited to-day, that I cannot bear more of it, and must leave you to imagine what more I would say on this occasion.

"I cannot—no, I cannot realize the busy scene at the Castle House, nor fancy you in your bridal appearance. I intend to place myself before the view of the house about the time I imagine you are walking down the gravel-walk, and stand there while you are at church, and till I think you are coming back again. How strange, how sad, that I cannot be with you! What a world is this, that its brightest pleasures are almost invariably attended with the keenest heart-rendings!"

The mother's feelings in parting with her daughter, though she had every reason to rejoice on the occasion, were very strongly excited. With the hope of administering comfort, Jane addressed to her a letter, of which the following is a part:—

“ I hope that, even so soon as this, Time has performed his kind office, and taken off the edge of your sorrow. If I did not know that he can perform wonders even in a few days, I could not venture to say so. I was grieved, indeed, but not much more surprised, to hear that you felt the parting so acutely, and when reading your description of it, almost congratulated myself that I was so far off. Now, however, I would gladly come and be your comforter, if I could. My dear father and mother, we have felt much for you. Believe that you have the love and the prayers of your absent children. I seldom close my eyes without thinking of you, and hoping you are comfortable. I feel the separation more this time than I did before, though in all other respects I enjoy as much comfort as I can expect to do in this world. I am rejoiced to know that you have had the solace of dear S——’s tenderness ; and in this respect you have indeed been gainers by my absence : she has, I know, done all that human sympathy can do to console and soothe you.

“ I walked here—to Barnstaple—last Wed-

nesday with Miss M—— without any fatigue, though it is ten miles of incessant up and down hill. The deepest snow remembered in Devonshire set in the day after I came, and has so blocked up the roads that I am detained a close prisoner. I intended to return on Monday; but they are so unused to snow here, that no one will venture to go, though I should not be afraid. I cannot tell, therefore, how long I may be detained. Though I am very comfortable at Mr. ——'s, I am now impatient to return home, as I left my brother only for a day or two."

The snow rendered the road between Barnstaple and Ilfracombe nearly impassable for more than a month; but Jane's anxiety for her brother would not admit of waiting, and she returned to him on horseback, long before a carriage ventured on the difficult enterprise.

With the loss of Anne, society at Ilfracombe possessed few attractions; and neither brother nor sister regretted more seclusion and leisure for their studies and pens. Isaac sometimes joined his sisters in their literary gipsying.

Already he had entered on that field of study of which "Ancient Christianity," "The Natural History of Enthusiasm," and "Saturday Evening" were afterwards the fruits.

The winter saw Jane at her old habits of work. "Display" was wrought out; one of those charming stories in which human nature is mirrored with that quiet fidelity which convinces the judgment and wins us to amendment.

To the often-asked question, "How to write a book?" Isaac's description of the birth of "Display" will answer for one at least:—

"My sister began it with a specific idea of the *qualities* she designed to exhibit, but with no definite plan for its execution. In pursuit of the same general object, she followed every day the suggestion of the moment; and this was perhaps the only way in which she would ever have written. It was her custom, in a solitary walk among the rocks, for half an hour after breakfast to seek that pitch of excitement without which she never took up a pen. This fervour of thought was usually exhausted in two or three hours' writing; after

which she enjoyed a social walk, and seldom attempted a second effort in the day; for she now had adopted the salutary plan of writing in the morning only, and to this plan she adhered ever after."

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receiving company ; father and mother have left the Castle House ; we have removed to Marazion, and Bonaparte to Elba ; so that the world does not pay us the compliment of standing still till we have time to animadver<sup>t</sup> on its revolutions.....

"I told S—— that we did not think of leaving Ilfracombe till August ; but finding that, during the summer, it does not often happen that vessels from Cornwall put into Ilfracombe, we determined to avail ourselves of the first good opportunity. We regretted that one offered so soon ; we had scarcely twenty-four hours' notice. But our little affairs were soon arranged, and at nine o'clock in the evening of the 9th we set sail, and a mild breeze wafted us from our dear Ilfracombe. We were tolerably well till about the middle of the night, when a fresh gale sprang up, and from that time to the moment of our landing, at nine o'clock the following evening, we suffered continued sickness. We landed at St. Ives, and took lodgings there for a week ; on Friday evening we reached this place, where we had before engaged lodgings. They are not

so pleasantly situated as those we occupied at Ilfracombe; but they are comfortable, and our hostess is a good woman, who takes pains to please us.

“Marazion is pleasantly situated on the margin of Mount’s Bay, which forms a fine sweep. On the western side lies Penzance, nearly opposite to us, at the distance of three miles; it is a fine ride by the sea-side. This morning we have been there: it is a large and very pleasant town, and being so near, we can have many of the conveniences it affords. The views here are open and agreeable. St. Michael’s Mount is a fine object, distant about half a mile; and Penzance and the adjacent villages very prettily skirt the bay. We were recommended here in preference to Penzance, as being milder, and it suits us better on account of its being more retired. In spite of our Nonconformity, we shall probably attend at the chapel of ease, at which Mr. Melville Horne now officiates, whose name I dare say you have heard.”

“My dear, dear family,” writes Jane, July 5, 1814, “I wish you could just look in and see

me in a beautiful study with my windows open to the bay, vessels passing before me, and the sea-breeze wafting a delicious coolness. The offer of Mrs. Grenfell's house, which I mentioned in my last, we accepted, and took possession last Monday; and we find it so cool, so airy, and so extremely pleasant, that we esteem it quite a providence for us, for I do think it likely to be essentially beneficial to Isaac during the heat of summer, besides the change of scene and cheerfulness, which produce a real effect. My bedroom has a fine sea-view, and I see the vessels passing as I lie in bed. Isaac's is very large and airy, with a view likewise. Our only difficulty is to know where to sit, we have such a choice. There are the dining-room, the drawing-room, and the sitting-room, and this charming study, besides our own rooms."

This beautiful residence was the home of Mrs. Grenfell and her daughter Lydia, better known to us as the lady whom Henry Martyn was compelled to leave behind when he left England for missionary life in India. Her love for him and her Saviour was equal to any

sacrifice it might have cost to accompany him ; but Mrs. Grenfell withheld her consent, and filial duty triumphed over tender ties.

Lydia Grenfell was in some respects unlike, in her religious character, any one whom Jane had known before. Her piety had the glow, fervency, and singleness which marked the great evangelical impulses of that day—impulses which had not yet consciously quickened the Christian feeling and profession of the Taylor family. Many a good Nonconformist heard suspiciously of the transports of Methodism, and was far less likely to fall into the rising swell of spiritual renovation than some of his untaught and more thoughtless neighbours. Lydia was of the English Church, one of that earnest band of “ evangelical ” believers which has provoked the illiberality of liberal Christians from that time to this. Jane’s acquaintance with her and with Methodism, as she afterwards found it in Cornwall, helped not only to allay prejudice, but to enlighten and enrich her religious character. Under these quickening influences she engaged in active charities, and became a teacher in a

Sabbath school under Miss Grenfell's care during her entire stay at Marazion.

"I am surrounded with those who know that I am Miss Taylor, but not that I am 'Jane,' and it sometimes makes me sigh for a renewal of intercourse with those who, for that simple reason, have yielded me an unmerited share of their regard. The many follies, infirmities, and deficiencies which are intimately known to them, may, it is true, be partially and for a time concealed from strangers; but yet I would rather be with those who, 'with all my faults, have loved me still.'.....

"Nothing could be more tranquil and agreeable than the manner in which our time passes here: we are both sufficiently occupied to preserve us from dulness; nor do we need other relaxation than the pleasure of conversing with each other in those hours of the day which we spend together. We have, however, some society here, more indeed than at Ilfracombe. I would gladly avoid the trouble of it, but I know it is good for me to be obliged to exert myself in conversation sometimes.....

“I do not think my attachment to Non-conformity is likely to be at all shaken by my present circumstances ; on the contrary, I long to attend ‘among my own people,’ and to worship in the simplicity of the gospel. Yet it is both pleasant and useful to associate with good people who differ from ourselves.

“St. Michael’s Mount, directly opposite to us, and accessible at low water, is the most striking object in the scene. We have not yet thoroughly explored it ; but it is much finer and more picturesque than we had expected, from such views as we had seen of it. Altogether we are pleased with our situation ; it is a complete contrast to the wild and solitary scenery of Ilfracombe. Being prone to form local attachments, I cannot at present decide impartially to which I should give the preference.”

“How long we shall sojourn in this land of strangers is quite uncertain. I feel with you that I dare not look forward to distances I may never reach ; and I too could think of next summer with the delightful hope of again see-

ing many that are dear to me ; but I am afraid of expecting it, or of forming any plan beyond to-day : by painful lessons I have learned that it is vain and dangerous to do so. Seldom, perhaps, till we have lived long enough to observe that the wishes we form for ourselves are either directly thwarted, or if indulged, that they wholly disappoint our expectation, we are sincerely disposed to say, ‘Choose thou mine inheritance for me.’ When such wishes appear very moderate and limited, falling far short even of the common objects of worldly pursuit ; when we ask neither for length of days, riches, nor honours, but only for some one favourite comfort, we are almost ready to expect that such a reasonable request will be granted ; and it is well if we are taught, either by being disappointed *of* it, or *with* it, that eager desires for anything short of the favour of God are displeasing to him and injurious to ourselves. There is a sweet feeling of security in committing our future way to him, with an entire dependence on his wisdom and goodness, and a cordial acquiescence in his appointments.”

They passed the summer in Mrs. Grenfell’s

house, and then took lodgings elsewhere—agreeable ones, if we may judge, for she writes home :—

“ The ease, tranquillity, and comfort of my present lot, so perfectly congenial to my temper and feelings, demand my constant thankfulness. It is no business of mine to inquire how long it will last. Long, I know, it will not last; and this I feel so sensibly, that my anxiety for myself and my dear family lessens as it respects our prosperity in this world, and increases for better things—that it may be well with us all in the next.”

And again, in a letter to her mother :—

“ Notwithstanding the toil of writing, it has its pleasures; and often, both this winter and last, when I have sat down at ten o’clock, all alone, in our snug parlour, with a cheerful fire, and with nothing to interrupt me for four hours, I have really felt very happy. As to my writing ‘under disadvantageous circumstances,’ it is so far from being the case, that I am sure I can never expect to be more favoured. All domestic cares, except just giving orders and settling my accounts, are completely taken

off my hands by Mrs. Thomas ; the afternoon suffices for the needlework I have to do, and we are little interrupted by visitors, besides the rare privilege of having a room and fire quite to myself during the morning. I therefore cannot plead my present circumstances in excuse, either for the poverty or slowness of my writing, for I do actually what you describe as so desirable, 'sit down composed and unembarrassed in my study.' Indeed, I cannot be sufficiently thankful for the large share of comfort I have enjoyed the last three years, with nothing to try my temper, and exempt from most of those unpleasant realities which you mention as inseparable from the charge of a household. But I do not wish to fly from family cares ; and one of the satisfactions of returning to you for a time would be that I might share them with you."

Besides Miss Grenfell, Anne Maxwell, who afterwards became the wife of the Rev. Henry Lyte, some of whose sweet hymns have found their way to America, and the family of the Rev. Melville Horne, once missionary to Africa, then officiating at the Established Church, all

earnest and devoted Christians, gave great interest to her life at Marazion.

There was no Dissenting chapel in the town, and the Taylors worshipped with Methodists or at the Established Church.

“ We are surrounded by Methodists,” Jane tells us, “ and have the opportunity of knowing what Methodism really is. We usually attend at their chapel. Their preachers appear to be zealous and devoted men, and their preaching well adapted to be useful to the class of persons who are their hearers. I have never anywhere before seen so general a profession of religion; and there is every reason to believe it is more than a profession with many. A little romantic fishing town just opposite to us, across the bay, contains, we are told, a large society of experienced and fervent Christians; and it is the case with many of the forlorn, desolate-looking villages in the neighbourhood, that seem in all things else a century or two behind the rest of the world.....

“ I am, indeed, much inclined to believe that the *poor* in every sense, the mentally poor, are generally the richest in faith—that they re-

ceive the gospel more simply *as it is*, without reasonings and disputings, and live upon it more entirely and more happily.....

“ You have indeed been led to the true, the only way of solving your difficulties on some of the deeper doctrines of religion. Every attempt to explain them has, to me, always rather increased than removed the difficulty and my own discouragement. But certainly I should not fly to *Arminianism* in order to escape from it. This system may indeed seem to remove the difficulty a step farther off; but there it meets us again, just the same as before, unless the omnipotence and omniscience of God be disputed. But let us wait; it is but a little while, and we shall comprehend something of the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God, though now ‘unsearchable and past finding out.’ How chilling are the very terms of controversy, and how unlike the language of the Bible. To live near to God, and to walk humbly with him, is the surest way of having our minds satisfied on these points. ‘The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him: he will show them his covenant.’ ”

Jane resumed her story, and late in the autumn “Display” issued from the press. It was received with great favour; and the commendations bestowed by those whose judgment and sincerity could not be questioned, comforted and strengthened the distrustful author.

As to criticisms made on its strictness, she utters some wise words, not untimely for us in these days:—

“ As to the dancing, I certainly did not think I had erred on the strict side; and I think I have observed the distinction you mention, of not objecting to dancing in *itself*. The children at Stokely, you may remember, were all dancing very merrily one evening. But, in fact, except with mere children, there is no such thing as ‘select Christian dances.’ Go where you will, it is the world who dance and the serious who do not. E—— is an instance of what is said about Emily: her newly acquired religion is so far from making her dull or precise, that there are many whom I have seen shake their heads at her youthful sprightliness. Yet, since she has been a Christian, she says she does not wish to dance, especially as

it could not be without associating with those who think only about this world. As to what Mr. Leddenhurst says about 'dancing through the world,' it is a remark I have heard made by those who are very far from being puritanical in their manners or narrow in their views; and I merely understand by it that a person of a contemplative and serious turn of mind, impressed with the grand realities of religion, and intent upon remedying, as far as possible, the sin and misery of the world, will not be much disposed to go 'dancing through it.'"

" What you told me in your last letter, made me almost envy the situation of those to whom religion appears as a glorious *novelty*, and who embrace it with all the ardour and gratitude and joy of a newly received message from heaven. They who 'from their childhood have been taught the Holy Scriptures,' have no doubt their advantages; but how liable are these advantages to be abused! It often happens, I believe, that persons who have been long familiar with the name of Jesus as the sinner's friend, are shamed out of their cold-

ness and negligence by the warmth and energy of those whose eyes are newly opened to behold him.

“ To inquiries such as those you make relative to your not having felt the strong convictions and the overwhelming fears that many experience in the commencement of their religious course, I have heard the most judicious Christians reply, that a holy walk with God, a humble consciousness of preferring him and his service to any other thing, is a better and safer evidence of a real change of heart than a reference to the most remarkable emotions of mind at any particular time. The Bible does not specify any certain measure of terror, or any violent apprehensions of the divine anger, as essential to true conversion. ‘ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,’ is its simple declaration; and as the evidence that we do believe, and that our repentance is genuine, we must bring forth the ‘fruits of righteousness.’ True sorrow for sin, flowing from a contemplation of divine mercy, which is called in the Scriptures ‘a broken heart,’ is surely a more acceptable sacrifice than

the most fearful apprehensions of divine wrath."

Jane employed her leisure at Marazion to much account. "Display" was no sooner disposed of than she began a volume of "Essays in Rhyme on Morals and Manners," which interested her own mind more than anything she had ever written. "She was indeed almost lost to other interests," says her brother. "Even her prevailing domestic tastes seemed forgotten; and in her daily walks she was often quite abstracted from the scene around her."

Her religious views, which had gained in depth and clearness, were more forcibly and vigorously expressed in the Essays; and she thus replies to the strictures of a friend to whom the manuscript was sent previous to its publication:—

" You will not be surprised, and I am sure you will not be offended, to see in how few instances I have availed myself of your criticisms, if you consider the nature of them,—that is, how very few are merely literary. To that few I paid every attention; most of them had

been marked for correction either by myself or other friends; but I was disappointed to find so few of that description, and still more, to find so many relating to matters of *opinion*, which you would expect me to give up. I cannot guess why the very same opinions, or creed, if you please (for I know that is a word you are particularly fond of), which were, I believe, expressed with quite as much plainness in 'Display,' should offend you so much less there. You say, indeed, that you have only remarked upon that style of language which refers to a *party*, not to a *principle*; but, on the contrary, I found not a single note upon those few passages in which I write as a Dissenter. If you mean to call religious sentiment *party*, I shall not dispute the term with you. Christianity has had a great many ill names from its commencement till this day. But they have never done it the least harm, nor ever will. Do you think I would condemn you for using a prayer-book, or kneeling at an altar, for going under water, or even for wearing a broad brim? No. But as I would not make my creed narrower than that of the

Bible, so I dare not make it wider. ‘There is no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved.’ ‘He that believes shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned.’ This is all I would contend for, and all, I think, that I have contended for, as essential; and if it is to this you object, I fear not boldly to say that you are wrong. And my heart’s desire and prayer is, that you may be led, as many a confident opposer has been, to what I must still maintain to be ‘the only place—the feet of Jesus.’

“I think your prejudice—may I say your party spirit? for never does party-spirit show itself so openly, or speak so narrowly, as when it embraces the sceptical creed—has got the better of your good taste in the present instance. Your taste is good when left to its free exercise; but in several of your criticisms I scruple not to say you have, under the influence of other feelings, betrayed a very bad one. Where, for instance, you object to passages that are simple quotations from the Bible: here I can speak quite confidently, in a literary view, that the effect of such quotations is good, and that they

confer a dignity on the verse. Where, for instance, I have introduced almost literally these passages, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy,' 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' To call such language 'religious cant,' is, in my opinion, 'irreligious cant.'

Jane Taylor now began her regular contributions to the *Youth's Magazine*, with some dread about the bondage of an engagement, lest writing "to order," whether she felt like it or not, might impair the sincere and genuine interest which she had taken in her work. Her objections, however, were overruled; and she found that habitual employment wrought as successfully, usefully, and pleasurable as spontaneous impulse and excitement.

These articles, running through seven or eight years of her life, were afterwards collected in a small volume, entitled "Contributions of Q. Q." Clearly traced in them are the increasing depth and vigour of her Christian life, the result of her Cornwall sojourn. Many, we doubt not, can trace the serious impressions of their early days to these wisely-put instructions.

"MARAZION, *September 19, 1816.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is quite time to ask you how you do once again upon paper, though, if you did but know it, I am very often making the inquiry in my thoughts. I have so many far distant and dear friends to think of now, that my thoughts are become quite expert at the business, and fly from Ongar to Rotherham, and from thence to Axminster, Bridport, or London, with wonderful ease and expedition. There was a passage in your last letter which brought old days so forcibly and suddenly to my recollection, that it made my tears overflow before I was aware. There is a long train of recollections, you know, connected with those days; but they are over and gone: all is settled, and well settled. For myself, as to external things, I was never so happy—I should rather say so comfortable, for that word best suits this world—as I am now. The last two years of my life have been so tranquil, so free from irritation, passed in a manner so suited to my taste and temper, with such a beloved and congenial companion; they have been so occupied with agreeable employments,

and so enlivened at times by pleasant society, that I have often thought, should anything occur to alter my present lot, I should look back upon it as the brightest spot in my life. Ah, well. I hope I am in some degree willing to commit the future to One who knows how to control it, and who will certainly prolong my present comfort, if it is for my good.

“I heard from — a little news which did but serve to set off our perfect tranquillity to more advantage.....

“Oh, what a world it is! Well, indeed, if we learn from such things to despise it in the right way, and to be looking toward a better country.”

“**MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,**—We thank you, dear father, for your kind remembrance of us. We need not such assurances of your affection; but still they are gratifying, long as we have been banished from a nearer enjoyment of it. I never think without pain of the very long time out of our short life that we have been separated, especially from dear father’s society, as for the best part of a twelvemonth before we left Colchester he was

from home, and since our removal we have been almost entirely away, so that our recollections of him are almost entirely confined to dear old engraving days; and they will ever be among my most delightful recollections. I doubt not that whenever we are permitted to meet, we shall all see in each other that time has not been still; but I am sure from both your letters you think I suffer more from anxiety than I do. I have, like Mrs. Palmer, an extreme dislike of 'being uncomfortable,' which generally disposes me to make the best of things; so that my letter gave you really a false idea if it made you think I 'was bowed down under a weight of cares.'

"In her last letter Anne tells me that James Montgomery has seen my specimens. I could not repeat all the handsome things he says of them, and only refer to his opinion as another weight in the scale. As a poet he is a *judge*, and is by no means given to flatter."

To a young friend she writes some golden words, as true and wise for us as for her:—

"From bitter experience, my dear Emma, I can warn you from indulging in that kind of

discontent with yourself which, as a little self-examination will convince you, has its source in anything rather than true humility. You mention in your letter being in the habit of making painful comparisons between yourself and your friends; and so far as such comparisons tend to stimulate us to an imitation of their perfections, it is well; but it, too, has a contrary effect, and leads us to view our own real or supposed defects with fretful despondency. I would not put such an affront on your understanding, dear Emma, as to try to persuade you that you have no cause for dissatisfaction; though, from general observation, I might say with perfect truth that you have no occasion for discouragement, but that you possess many advantages, both personal and relative, which demand your gratitude.

“ But we are too apt, I fear, instead of looking *within*, to look *without*; and even when regarding the perfections of our most valued friends, are we not too apt to envy them the less important advantages, and those which are least attainable, rather than to emulate those solid advantages which are within our reach ?

It is their beauty, their accomplishments, their talents, their taste that we desire to possess ; while their piety, their usefulness, their sweetness, and humility are attainable, if we pursue the same end and make the same sacrifices to attain them. Religion will not indeed do everything for us. It will give us neither graces, nor accomplishments, nor taste ; but the blessings it offers are a humble mind, a meek and lowly spirit ; and it will enable us, not only with resignation, but with cheerfulness and gratitude, to take an *allotted* portion, and will teach us industriously to cultivate our one talent, if we have no more.

“ A large family is a large field for the exercise of all virtues, calling for self-denial, patience, and forbearance, and demanding our activity, kindness, and generosity. And how much the comfort of our future lives must depend on *present conduct* ! When our parents are no more, and every opportunity of showing them respectful attention and grateful love is over ; when our brothers and sisters are dispersed, and no longer require our affectionate attention, it will be an unspeakable happiness if we can

look back upon those days without painful reflection or self-reproach. I said *respectful* attention: respect is a word I am fond of, for if well attended to in a family, it will go a great way towards promoting its order and happiness. A respectful conduct should by no means be confined to *strangers*, where common politeness demands it, nor even to our parents and acknowledged superiors. The familiarity which breeds contempt should be carefully avoided even among brothers and sisters of equal ages. Affection loses its *gracefulness* without that accompanying respect which should never be lost sight of, even among perfect equals. ‘Honour to whom honour is due’ is a text well worth studying. You have a brother, and I am sure you are not insensible to this privilege. If you are really solicitous to reap benefit from his society, be not contented to love and admire him, but let the deference you pay to his superiority influence your *conduct* and your manner towards him, and you will find it greatly promoting and dignifying your mutual affection.”

Again she writes Emma: “Self-disapproba-

tion, my dear, is the first step towards improvement; without this *nothing* can be done. Nor need any one be greatly discouraged even should they find *much* to be done. It should stimulate to extra exertion, and by no means lead to despondency. From sad experience I know the wide difference between our planning and reforming: weak resolutions and half-efforts will never do. If we wish to amend, we must make up our minds to *hard work*; nothing but *real fighting* can insure victory.

“ You know far better than I on what your dissatisfaction is grounded; it is not my business to inquire. I would only urge you by every argument not to rest contented at this critical period with careless complaints or faint endeavours, but to be *absolute* and *prompt*; and that the disease may not be ‘healed slightly,’ do not set about external reformations, nor rest satisfied till you really *are* what you would *appear* to be. Desire to become a *sterling character*; and whether or not you excite the admiration of strangers, be ambitious to *respect yourself*, and to win the esteem of your best friends and nearest associates. A prevailing

desire for *admiration*, if not wholly incompatible with moral and religious improvement, is, I believe, the greatest bar to it.

“ How encouraging too are the promises of a new heart and a *right* spirit to those earnestly seeking them ; so that we have no right to despise. Only, this must not tempt us to relax our *own* exertions. We must watch as well as pray, for heavenly arms are provided on purpose that we may *fight* with them.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOME AGAIN.

N June 1816, Jane Taylor and her brother bade adieu to Marazion, with its balmy airs, sea-girt views, and Christian friends, bending their steps slowly and circuitously towards home. In the journey Anne's new home was included, and a six weeks' sojourn in Yorkshire yielded them the liveliest enjoyment. The home was all they could desire: affection within, agreeable society in the neighbourhood, hearts and opportunities for Christian influence and usefulness. By the last of August, however, she dates from Ongar, and thus describes her return:—

“ I think my last was written from Sheffield. We soon after took a painful leave of our dear sister, and returned, after a three years' absence,

to Ongar. Oh, what a pleasure it was to be welcomed by kind parents to a *home*! Nothing could exceed their kindness and indulgence. And after so long an interval, we knew how to value this affection. They thought me not looking well; and it has been my dear mother's constant business to nurse me up again during my stay. Our house stands alone in a pretty country. It is an old farm-house, more picturesque than splendid, and therefore it suits both our tastes and our fortunes. All my love of nature returned in a scene so well adapted to excite it; and it was delightful to see our dear father and mother enjoying, in their declining years, so peaceful a retreat, and wishing for no other pleasures than their house and garden and their mutual affection afford."

"I wish this fine morning," she writes to another, "I could take a turn with you in your pleasant garden, and talk instead of write; or rather, if wishing were of any avail, I would wish that you could take a turn with me in mine, which I think you would enjoy. I must, however, tell you something of our movements. We stayed a fortnight longer with Anne than

we proposed: the time passed pleasantly, and we were unwilling to part. I think, however, you, who know my taste for retirement and my dislike of general company, would have pitied me if you had seen the continued bustle of visiting with which my time was occupied. The contrast with our mode of life at Marazion was as great as it could be; perhaps the total change of scene was what I needed.

"On the 13th of August we left Rotherham, and in a few days reached our dear paternal home, after an absence of three years. It was indeed a joyful meeting. And when, that evening, we once more knelt around the family altar, I believe our hearts glowed with gratitude to Him who had permitted us thus to assemble in peace and comfort, and had disappointed all our fears. Here we are again in complete retirement; and a sweeter retreat I do not wish for. We are nearly a mile from the town, and surrounded with the green fields. The house is an old-fashioned place, with a pretty garden, which it is the delight of my father and mother to cultivate. At the door is a rural porch, covered with a vine. Here we

are rarely interrupted by any one; and although only twenty miles from the great world, we enjoy the most delightful seclusion. The rooms are large and pleasant, and the whole has exactly that rural air which we all so much admire."

It was at this time that Jane and her mother began the "Correspondence between a Mother and a Daughter at School," for the *Youth's Magazine*; a series of articles full of good sense and that remarkable insight of character which distinguishes her.

To Miss S—— G——.

"ONGAR, August 28, 1817.

"MY DEAR S——, When I heard of your being suddenly summoned to attend your brother, I felt an immediate desire to write to you; not from the idle expectation that I could say anything to lessen your uneasiness, but from a feeling of true sympathy which similarity of circumstances awakened. I asked for your address when I wrote to Anne, but was still dubious whether to trouble you with a letter, when the arrival of yours quite determined me. I thank you for it, and I thank

you still more for finding any pleasure in writing to me, and for the assurances of your kind recollections. They are, I assure you, acceptable. I have learned to value a little *love* more than many times the quantity of *praise*; and when I receive expressions of affection from any one who I know in some degree understands me, and who has had opportunity of observing many of my faults, I feel both obliged and *comforted*.

“I was truly glad to hear a better account of your brother’s health. I think you cannot yet have felt more desponding than I have formerly done about my brother. For a considerable time I was quite persuaded that he could not recover; and whenever I allowed myself to entertain any hope, I felt all the time a secret conviction that it was wilful flattery. Yet now—I would say it with thankfulness—he is so far recovered as to remove all immediate anxiety. I know not whether there is anything encouraging to you in this; but it *is* encouraging to know that the same almighty Friend who spoke the healing word in one case can do so in another; and assuredly *will*,

if it be really desirable. He who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' still regards the prayers and tears of a sorrowing sister. I used very often to say, 'Lord, if thou art here my brother shall not die;' and I used to try to add, 'Thy will be done;' and if ever I can say this with sincerity, it is when I take pains to reflect on the wisdom and goodness of God, and think how *certainly* what he does is best. And even with respect to the spiritual interests of beloved friends, where certainly acquiescence in disappointment is most difficult—perhaps in this world impossible—even in this case there is great consolation in recollecting that the Judge of all the earth will do right. We are not more benevolent or more compassionate than he; and it is with this simple persuasion that I find it easiest to repel those hard and rebellious thoughts of God which certain passages to which you allude are so apt to excite. We may be sure that if we put any construction upon them that is in any way injurious to the divine character in our minds, it is—it must be—a false construction. I think there is greater encouragement to pray for the salvation of those

dear to us than for anything except our own.....

"I am sorry to hear of the unpleasant circumstances at \_\_\_\_\_. People will never understand that it is not religion, but *irreligion*, that causes these mischiefs. If 'the children of God are peace-makers,' surely the breakers of peace cannot claim him for their Father. I remember Miss \_\_\_\_\_, and that she was what you describe. I knew one in still humbler life at \_\_\_\_\_, of the same sort. She was a servant in the house we occupied there for a few months; a Methodist; and of such slender abilities that she could rarely understand a common order till it had been repeated once or twice. Yet she was indeed 'wise unto salvation.' Her conversation—perfectly unaffected and unassuming—was, on religious subjects, enlightened and edifying. Her plain face beamed till it was beautiful, with Christian love and peace. I remember her with affection and respect. How strange it seems, that in Christian societies so few should be found who thus '*adorn* the doctrine they profess in all things.' Nothing is more discouraging than

such a state of things. But in one sense we have nothing to do except with ourselves. If our own lamps be not burning, we might find better employment than to lament the luke-warmness of others."

Jane's religious belief had long been settled. Her life corresponded to it. Besides her distinct choice, all her predilections, leanings, inspirations, desires, and associations were on the side of Christ. Yet she failed to appropriate to herself that comfort in the hope set before us which it is the believer's peculiar privilege to enjoy; consequently, her hope had always been trembling and afraid.

Faint she was, yet always pursuing. "A duty-Christian," as some one called his friend who, with grave fidelity, did his Master's work with little present comfort or future hope. But the joy came. Singleness, sincerity, and fidelity never lose their reward. They are crowned at last with a great rejoicing.

It was so with Jane.

"My mother told you," she wrote her sister, "of my having joined the church. You may have supposed that I was frightened into it by

my complaint. But I feel thankful that this was not the case ; for it was not till after I had consulted Mr. Clyne that I felt any alarm about it ; nor had I before any idea of its being of a formidable kind. My mind, all the summer, had been much in the state it has been in for years past ; that is, unable to apply the offer of the gospel to myself, and all confusion and perplexity when I attempted to do so. One evening—about three weeks before going to London for advice—while alone in my room, and thinking on the subject, I saw by an instantaneous light that God would, for Christ's sake, forgive my sins. The effect was so powerful that I was almost dissolved by it. I was unspeakably happy. I believe that had I died that moment I should have been safe. Though the strength of the emotion soon abated, the effect in a great degree remained. A fortnight afterwards I told Isaac what had taken place, and he urged me to be proposed immediately to the church. It was in this state I went to London ; and when I heard what was to me wholly unexpected, I could not but consider the change in my feel-

ings as a most kind and timely preparation for what, but a few weeks before, would have overwhelmed me with consternation and distress. As it was, I heard it with great composure, and my spirits did not at all sink till after I returned home. Since then I have had many desponding hours from the fear of death. The happiness I enjoyed for a short time has given place to a hope which, though faint, secures me from distress."

She joined the Ongar church, under her father's pastoral care, in October 1817; and though active religious labours were not easy from early habit, nor did they suit her natural tastes, yet she promptly engaged in them, as she had strength and opportunity, from a deep conviction that Christians should not live "to please themselves," but be "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Serious premonitions of the disease—induration of the heart—which ended her days, had disclosed themselves. No immediate danger caused alarm either to Jane or her friends, only the "occasional pain" which kept alive anxiety.

"But I endeavour to cast this care on God,"

she says, "and especially to impress on my mind that if ever the most sanguine hopes of recovery should be realized, it would make no *essential* difference in my prospects. There is no cure for mortality. Supreme regard to my eternal interests is absolutely necessary, independent of all immediate considerations. Yet I feel the benefit of this perpetual monitor, and pray that its voice may not be heard in vain. How encouraging the simple promise, 'Ask, and ye shall receive,' especially when we reflect that God, who cannot lie, has given it to us. And it encourages us to ask, not only for salvation from the wrath to come, or for just grace enough to save us at last, with which it would be easy to be contented, but for great spiritual blessings, eminent spirituality of mind—a life 'hid with Christ in God,' so as to have at last an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God."

"LONDON, *May 20, 1819.*

"I am come to London for a few days to execute some home commissions. These fine showers that are making the hills and vales rejoice are making London more dreary than

usual ; and they confine me to a dull apartment, where, in rather lower spirits than are common to me even in London, I sit down in perfect solitude to seek your distant society. My brother is out for the whole day on business. Solitude in the country is sweet, but in London it is forlorn indeed. So you see all things conspire to make this a very animated composition !

“ My health has not been so good this spring as during the past winter and summer. For this there is a ‘ needs-be.’ But though I believe these continual *warnings* to be good and necessary, yet *fear* seems to have an unfavourable influence upon my mind, inasmuch as I am apt to suspect the genuineness of prayer that is rendered more fervent than usual by an apprehension of danger. I feel regret unspeakable in looking back upon those past years of health and vigour that were devoted to self-pleasing. And yet is there not ‘ all consolation’ and consolation *for all* in the unqualified offers of the gospel, and in the simplicity of its declarations—‘ Daughter, be of good cheer ; thy sins, which are many, are

forgiven thee' ? What needs one more than this ? And surely nothing less will do—not at least for those who are obliged by some threatening disease to realize their own mortality, and to look at eternity as those who are in sound health cannot see it. In comparing the temperature of my feelings with yours, I was discouraged ; yet I know that religion does not alter the constitution of the mind any more than that of the body. In you ardent and energetic, in me languid and phlegmatic, it would never assume the same appearances. They, however, are doubtless the happiest Christians, the constitution of whose minds is the most favourable to the *life* of religion. But I feel that these considerations will not serve as an excuse for me, seeing that 'God is able to make all grace abound to us also.'

" *Monday morning.*—I heard yesterday three good sermons.....That in the evening by a plain Methodist preacher—the best, I thought, of the three ; that is, the most to the grand purpose of preaching. Why do not we hear such sermons oftener ? Some ministers appear to be under an unaccountable infatuation, as if

they were afraid or ashamed to come to the point ; as if every subject connected with religion were to be discussed in preference to that which is the foundation of all ; as if they would rather direct their hearers to any surrounding objects than immediately to 'the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world.' How little do they consider the disappointment they occasion to those of their congregations who go, Sabbath after Sabbath, hungering for 'the Bread of life'—who need the consolations of the gospel !

" It is not strange that the wicked should go on in their wickedness ; but is it not strange that those who know anything of religion should not adorn it more ? This is the discouragement. Yet perhaps there are many 'hidden ones' who, unknown to their fellow-Christians, are living near to God, while those who stand foremost in the Church are content 'to follow Christ afar off.'.....I rejoice to hear from a mutual friend that you are actively engaged in doing good. There is something stimulating in reading Paul's salutations to the good women of his acquaintance. He evidently

singles out those for special notice who were most active and zealous in good works—‘Priscilla, his helper in Jesus Christ;’ ‘Mary, who bestowed much labour on them;’ ‘Phebe, a succourer of many’—while we may imagine that his more general remembrance—‘to all the saints that are with you’—refers to others a little resembling those modern professors of Christianity of whom charity is bound to ‘hope all things.’

“This increase of piety in our dearest friends is *real prosperity*; and when we think prosperity of any other kind very desirable, we forget ourselves, and view the world unwisely.”

To MRS. W— (MISS E. M—).

“ONGAR, September 14, 1819.

“I truly rejoice with you in the happiness of seeing another of those most dear to you ‘walking in the truth.’ There is indeed no greater joy than this. *This is family prosperity.* How weak is our faith when we suffer anxiety for any other kind of success to exceed the desire for the endless happiness of those we love! and how little do we feel like Christians, when we are surprised and mortified to

see them encountering those trials and disappointments which we know to be the most usual and effectual means of promoting spiritual life. I have just received an account of the severe trial of one, of whom, judging as the world judges, one should say that severe affliction was not needed. But God sees not as man ; those whom he loves best he ordinarily chastens most, that they may be 'seven times refined.' 'To him that hath shall be given, that he may have abundantly.'.....

"Poor Mrs. —, what an unhappy life must hers be! unspeakably more unhappy than it would be if she were wholly destitute of that 'little religion,' as it is called, that she has! To see age tenaciously clinging to the receding world is the most melancholy and disgusting sight this evil world presents.....

"In so small a society as that with which we are connected here, zeal, for want of stimulus, is apt to sink into total torpor. In this respect there are advantages in living in a large town, where the zeal of the few keeps the lukewarmness of the many from freezing. I feel heavily the peculiar responsibility that attaches to me

as a single woman, remembering that of such it should be said that 'she careth for the things of the Lord ;' while, partly from indolence and partly from a sort of infelicity in dealing with others, I am too apt to recoil from those very duties which seem to lie most in my way. 'She hath done what she could,' is a sentence which often strikes painfully on my conscience. It is high praise ; and what sacrifice can be too great to deserve it ?"

The orphan family of a friend, James Medland, Esq. of Newington, came in for a large share of her affection and counsel during those later years. Elizabeth, the second daughter, had still stronger claims on her as the dear and intimate friend of her brother Isaac, whom she afterwards married.

A letter addressed to Sarah Medland and her sisters and brothers, written from Ongar, August 1822, is running over with that loving solicitude which experienced and faithful hearts feel for new hands entering on the great work of life :—

"As my time is much limited, I cannot

devote much of it to subjects of inferior moment, but will speak at once on that which is all-important, and in which all other advices are included. But I know not where to begin, or how to find language to express the sense of this boundless subject. No language, indeed, can do this, and therefore we find in the Scriptures no attempt is made beyond the most plain and simple statements, but which are, on that very account, the most striking. What can add fervour to the question, 'What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Yes, my dear friends, there *is* very great danger, notwithstanding all the warnings and admonitions we receive—there *is* very great danger of losing our souls. It is so easy to pass on from one stage of life to another, from youth to age, with good intentions towards religion, and with a common, respectable attention to it, without once coming to the point, without once tasting the happiness of a good hope, or enjoying the supreme satisfaction of making a full surrender of our hearts and lives to God. Multitudes of the professors of religion thus live and thus die—making their

comfort and prosperity in this life their chief object of pursuit, and paying only so much attention to religion as they deem *absolutely necessary* to escape eternal destruction. But this is not Christianity as the Scriptures describe it; and it is surprising that, with the Bible in their hands, any person can make so great a mistake about it. If God has not our *hearts*, we are not his; he will accept nothing less. If our affections are not in heaven, we shall never reach it.

“I remember that, during my youth, I was for many years greatly discouraged, and almost in despair at last, on this account—feeling the impossibility of bringing my earthly mind to prefer spiritual things, to love God better than the world. At length, in a letter from a pious friend, I was reminded that this great work, though impossible to me, was easy to him, and that he had promised to do it for all who ask. From that time my difficulties began to yield. I saw how absurd it was to doubt the promise of God, and that it was in respect to these very difficulties that he says, ‘Seek, and ye shall find.’ So that I began to see with unspeakable

joy that the hardness, reluctance, and earthliness of my heart were no real obstacles, provided that I did but apply to him for a cure. Yes, to cast ourselves entirely on God to do all for us, in the diligent use of means, is the sure, the only way to obtain the benefit. But it is surprising what reluctance there is in the mind to do this, and how ready we are to try every other means first; especially we are unwilling to come by a simple act of faith to the Saviour, and to accept from him a remedy for all the evils of our nature: although there is no other way, how much labour is often lost for want of this. Come to him, my dear friends, and 'he will not cast you out.' He declares he will not; and come as you are. It is Satan's constant artifice to persuade us that we must wait till we are *fit* to come; and as this faith that believes and lives, however simple, is the gift of God, pray incessantly, importunately, till you receive it.

"I am sure you are all convinced already that delay, neglect, or indifference in religion is the greatest folly, the deepest cruelty we can practise towards ourselves, as it respects

our interests in the future world. And, indeed, it is so as to this world too. I have seen something more of life than you; and I have lived long enough to see that promise in numerous instances fulfilled, that 'they who seek first the kingdom of God' have other things added to them, in a more especial and desirable way than those who make them the primary object. I am firmly convinced that, taking the whole of life together, the most pious and devoted persons, such as made an early and complete surrender of heart and life to God, have most real prosperity and success in this world, as well as infinitely more enjoyment of earthly good. But really this is a point scarcely worth proving, when the interests of a boundless futurity are concerned; yet as it is one of the chief illusions of 'the father of lies' to persuade persons that, in becoming decidedly religious, they must sacrifice the choicest pleasures of life, and that God's ways are not 'ways of pleasantness,' it is desirable to expose the falsehood. All the real and reasonable enjoyments of life are entirely compatible, not only with an ordinary profession of religion,

but with the highest spirituality of mind, and are greatly sweetened by it, if kept in their subordinate place; and as for the rest—the gaiety, the vanity, the evil tempers, the restless desires of a worldly heart, its selfishness and frowardness, and all those indulgences which are forbidden to us—they are as certainly destructive of our true interests and happiness here as of our eternal happiness. Of this truth, experience too late convinces the most successful votaries of this world. But let us rise above these lower considerations. The question is, Are we desirous to secure the salvation of our souls? And it is impossible to fix a steady thought on eternity without being so. Then let us take the Bible for our rule, and never rest till we have a scriptural foundation for our hope; nor till our life, as well as our creed, is conformed to its precepts and examples. Allow me then to mention those means which are most essential to the attainment of this happiness.

“To use means is our part: it is a comparatively easy part; and if we will not even do this, it shows that we are not at all in earnest

on the subject. I will mention then, as the first and the last—as that which is indispensable to our making any progress in religion—*daily, constant, private prayer*. I am aware that where this habit has not been formed very early, there may be a sort of awkwardness and false shame felt in the commencement of it in a family; but it is *false shame*, which a little effort will conquer, and a short time entirely remove. I believe you know that it was my intention to have recommended this practice to you, if not already adopted: and now I cannot feel satisfied without doing so; for if ever I was sure that I was giving good advice, I am sure of it in this instance; and I will—I must most cordially request your attention to it. Perhaps some of you might reply that, seldom feeling inclined to prayer, it would generally be a formal and heartless service; but this is the very reason why it must never be neglected. This reluctance to spiritual engagements is what the best of Christians have to combat with; and it can only be overcome by prayer. If then you were to wait till you are of yourselves so disposed, depend upon it you

would pass through life and plunge into eternity in a prayerless state. And although you may often engage in private devotion with little feeling and no apparent benefit, yet there is one certain advantage gained by it, namely, that the habit is strengthened ; and as we are creatures of habit, and God has made us so, he requires us to avail ourselves of its important advantages. If there is any one thing more than another among the many privileges of a religious education for which I feel thankful, it is the having been trained from my early years to retire morning and evening for this purpose. I found that a habit thus early and strongly formed was not easily broken through, notwithstanding all the vanity of my youthful years ; and however much I have to lament the abuse of it, yet if ever I have known anything of religion, it is to the closet that I must trace it ; and I believe that universal experience testifies that our comfort and progress in the divine life are entirely regulated by the punctuality and fervency of our engagements there. There is no need that the exercise should be tedious ; a short portion of Scripture

read with thought, and a few simple sentences uttered with the whole heart, are far preferable to a much longer address, in which the same heartless phraseology is continually repeated. But as your desires enlarge, so will your petitions; and the more you are in earnest, the less liable you will be to fall into hackneyed and formal expressions.

“There is another practice which, next to prayer and reading the Scriptures, I have found most profitable; I mean reading once every day, at the time either of morning or evening retirement, a few pages of some pious book—selecting for this purpose, not the light productions of the day, but the writings of the most eminently useful and impressive authors. Christian biography also is peculiarly profitable. This custom need not add more than ten minutes to the time of retirement; and it is, I think, one of the very best means for retaining a daily impression of serious things. Habit, also,—try it for one month, and see if it is not so,—will render this pleasant, even though it should seem irksome at first. If you will excuse my entering into such minute

particulars,—which I should not do on any other subject,—I will add that the most advantageous time for the purposes I have recommended is not that of retiring for the night: drowsiness will generally invade us then; besides, few young people can be quite alone at that time, and a prayer said by the bedside, with a companion present, is not—I might almost say *cannot* be personal prayer. It is a good, I will call it a blessed custom for a family to disperse to their respective places of retirement half an hour before supper. Nor is it, you must be aware, from my own experience alone that I recommend it; for it is a practice which I know to be strictly observed by all my pious friends, and which I have remarked in every serious family in which I ever visited. As to the morning, it is highly desirable that it should take place before breakfast, as afterwards it interferes with other duties, and is in great danger of being quite neglected. Besides, it is as essential to the health of the body as of the soul to rise at least early enough for such a purpose. I fear I shall tire you, and will mention but one other

thing, and that is the advantage of a more particular improvement of Sabbath evenings, as the time most suitable for longer retirement and deeper thoughtfulness than the engagements of other days will admit.

“ My dear friends, be not contented with low aims and small attainments in religion: they are indeed fearful signs of insincerity; or, at best, proceed from a merely slavish fear of the consequences of quite neglecting it. Oh, do aspire to something beyond an ordinary reputable profession of it! *Here* ambition is sanctified. Determine to number yourselves among the happy few; and do not be disengaged by difficulties, nor think it too much for you to attain. It is not humility, but inactivity and despondency, that leads us to think so. God will give us all the grace and strength and ability we really desire and ask for.

“ And let me affectionately recommend you early to seek to be engaged in some sphere of active usefulness. Doing good is the most excellent means of getting good. There is no mistake greater than to suppose that we are

sent into the world only to attend, however industriously, to our own personal or even family interests. Love to our neighbour demands our active exertions in his behalf; and we are all required, more or less, 'to go and work in the vineyard.' We have all a talent entrusted to us; and what shall we say when our Lord comes, if we have not improved it? Did you never remark, in reading the sixteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, how St. Paul, in his salutations, particularizes those who were most zealously engaged in good works—'Phebe, a servant of the church, and a succourer of many;' 'Priscilla and Aquila, his helpers in Christ;' 'Mary, who bestowed much labour on them;' 'Persis, who laboured much in the Lord'—while he passes over with a slight remembrance, or notes with censure, others who 'minded only their own things, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's'? It must have been gratifying to have been thus distinguished by the apostle; but oh how much more so to be approved by Him who, for our good, requires these services from us, and to hear him say at last, 'Well done, good

and faithful servant!' We should suffer no day to pass without thinking of and acting for *that* day when we shall be 'judged according to our works,' as the evidences of our faith; and very encouraging is that kind and considerate expression of our Lord concerning a poor woman, showing that he is no hard master, and not unreasonable in his requisitions, 'She hath done what she could.' But how few of us deserve this praise! I am persuaded you would find useful activity one of the best preservatives against the innumerable temptations to which, as youth advances, you will be exposed. How many young persons have blessed God that ever they were led to engage in Sunday-school teaching. It profitably occupies the time which, if wasted in frivolity and indulgence, leads to the worst consequences; and in teaching others, a double blessing often descends upon the teacher.....

"With regard to our conduct, whether at home or abroad, we cannot mistake if we will but follow the precepts of Scripture in their plain and literal sense. This is too much neglected—strangely neglected, even by those who profess

to make the Bible their rule. If we had no other directions whatever for our conduct than those contained in that beautiful chapter, the twelfth of Romans, it would make a heaven of earth were they but attended to. It is an excellent chapter to read very often, and deeply and daily to study. It would make a little paradise of any society or family where its spirit was imbibed ; and after all, it is at home—in the bosom of our families, in our daily and hourly tempers and conduct—that we have the best opportunity of practising holy obedience to the commandments of Christ. Keeping these commandments, ‘ which are not grievous ’—though we are prone to think they are till we try—implies a continual exercise of self-denial ; and if we are conscious that we make no such sacrifices—that we are not in the habit of denying ourselves—it is plain that we are not following Him at all ; for those who do must bear some cross. There is, indeed, something in the very sound of the word *self-denial* which alarms our indolence, indulgence, pride, and wilfulness. But it is a false alarm ; for these very qualities—indolence, indulgence, pride,

and wilfulness—are the greatest enemies to our peace and happiness; and one day's experience is enough to show that, in proportion as they are resisted and mortified, we are comfortable, tranquil, and happy.

“ May God bless you all, and lead every one of you safely through this dangerous world to his eternal rest! This is the earnest hope, and will be the frequent prayer, of your sincere and affectionate friend,

J. T.”

## CHAPTER IX.

### LIFE'S SUNSET.

 ANE'S interests and affections centred very much in Ongar during the rest of her life, though frequent visits and journeys drew her away, chiefly at the solicitation of friends, who urged that change of scenes and social pleasures were among the best means of recruiting, if not recovering, her health.

“But I find,” she says, “that home is the place which suits me best.”

Amid all the usual alternations of hope and fear, her disease slowly and steadily gained on her.

“And it requires much,” she says, “utterly to extinguish the hope of recovery.”

Yet her chief anxiety related to a hope of

the better life beyond. The doubts which now cast their shadows on her, if doubts they were, arose from her high standard of Christian character. A full and free salvation she clearly apprehended ; but from want of a sufficiently explicit and authoritative exposition of the *law* of Christ, she felt the *gospel* was often fatally abused by the professedly Christian world. And she rejoiced in the glad tidings with trembling, unless accompanied with a fearless and uncompromising declaration of the truth, that every one shall receive "according to his works."

"I have no doubt," she often said to her brother, "as to the way of salvation ; it lies upon the surface of the Scriptures ; but those who shall receive the benefit of this free salvation, and who shall be accounted worthy to stand before the throne, are those who on earth are meet for heaven by being truly like Christ. And am I—are the mass of those of whom we are accustomed to think well—are they *like* Christ ?"

And who will not say, if this be error, it is at least erring on the safe side ?

If Jane felt her own literary aspirations extinguishing, we can well fancy them kindling anew in her brother Isaac. Their friend Josiah Condor was at that time editor of the *Eclectic Review*, then in the zenith of its fame, with Robert Hall, John Foster, and Olinthus Gregory among its able supporters. Another thinker was added when Isaac Taylor joined its staff of contributors.

His first independent venture was made in 1822, in a small volume, called "Elements of Thought," succeeded by a new translation of the "Characters of Theophrastus," accompanied by pictorial renderings of the characters, drawn and etched by himself. And since Jane's pen was slowly slipping out of her hand, we can see how her fine sympathies and intellectual keenness were kept in vigour by daily participation in the congenial pursuits of one so dear to her.

In the autumn of 1823, accompanied by Isaac and Elizabeth Medland, she spent a few weeks at Margate, visited several friends, walked in Cowper's garden, and was returning, much invigorated, home, when an unusual

exposure to wet and rain imperilled the benefit of the trip. Still at her desk, we find her writing to Elizabeth's young brother, then at school :—

“ I have heard with very great pleasure, dear John, the good accounts that have reached your sister respecting your conduct at school ; and hope you will feel ambitious to *maintain* this good character. We all know that it is easier to set out well, while there is the stimulus of novelty to excite us, than steadily to persevere in a good course. Yet I need not remind you that nothing short of such steady perseverance in well-doing will avail anything to your real advantage ; and it is this alone that truly merits praise. You cannot therefore guard too carefully against the first small temptations that may present themselves, of whatever kind. If these are yielded to, others more powerful will quickly follow ; and thus, for want of a little timely effort, every good resolution may eventually fail. ‘ He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little ’.....

“ It has been frequently remarked that pupils

who show most quickness and make most progress in their studies, are the least worthy of praise in other and *more important* respects. Dear John, do not let this be your case ; never be content with half a character, but be still more ambitious to distinguish yourself for obedience, gentleness, kindness, and a resolute resistance to all you know to be wrong, remembering that brilliancy, unconnected with goodness, proves a curse rather than a blessing.

" On the other hand, let me remind you of the importance of diligently improving your present opportunities for acquiring knowledge. How valuable it is, and how glad you will be of it in future, you can scarcely at present imagine. And be assured, no time will ever arrive when the business you now have to attend to can be better done, even if it could be done at all. Nor can time or opportunities lost in one period ever be recovered in another, because every period of life is fully occupied with its own proper engagements ; so that what is lost in youth is lost, irrecoverably lost. Now the only way to make real proficiency in learning of any kind, is to acquire a love of it

for its own sake; and this may always be done by taking pains. Never be contented with merely getting through your daily tasks in order to escape fines and punishments. A boy of sound sense and strong mind can find pleasure in that daily round of business which to the sluggish or trifling is all toil; and those difficulties which discourage and disgust the idle, do but stimulate the diligent to greater efforts.

"But, my dear John, let me still more urgently entreat you not to suffer either business or pleasure to divert your mind from what you know is all-important. Oh, do not indulge that foolish and false idea, that the great concerns of religion may be put off to a future day! Do but try, and you will find that 'the fear of the Lord is indeed the beginning of wisdom,' and that they who seek him *early* enjoy his peculiar favour and blessing on all the pursuits and events of life; and you, bereaved as you are of earthly friends, how much more than you can possibly at present imagine do you need God to be your Father and the Guide of your unprotected youth! Study his will then by constantly reading the Scriptures, and seek him

for yourself by earnest prayer, and be assured you will not seek in vain. I will not apologize for not writing you an entertaining letter, since it is the desire I feel for your truest good that induces me to fill it with such plain advice. You have heard how much your sister and I were disappointed in not being able to visit you while we were at Bedford. Believe me, dear John, "Your affectionate friend."

In November she went to London to take leave of an old friend who was about to leave England, and thus end a long and endeared intercourse. The interview was prolonged, and to its excitement was added a chilly rain, in which she returned to Ongar. A cold thus taken aggravated her disorder and wasted her strength, and the winter set in under unfavourable circumstances. Yet she always joined the family circle; and when unable to do so of herself, Isaac brought her in his arms.

Jane was slight in figure, and her features, regular and delicately formed, were full of that varying expression most difficult for the pencil to catch and portray. Every motion revealed the activity of her mind, and a peculiar arch-

ness and sprightliness of manner lent a charm to all she did.

“I need not tell you,” she writes Anne, “how kindly I am nursed, and how tenderly all is done for my relief and comfort. I am thankful for being so free from pain; my suffering is almost entirely from languor and weariness and difficulty of breathing. I often think I ought to rejoice in this gradual decay, in being thus secured from far greater suffering; but I desire to leave it all with God.

“You do not forget that this summer is your time for coming to Ongar. I have been looking forward to it for a long time.

“Dear Anne and Mr. Gilbert, remember me in your prayers, as I am sure you do.”

Winter passed, the singing birds returned to their spring boughs, and Jane had time often to inquire:—

“Saviour, what means this breadth of death,  
This space before me lying;  
These deeps where life so lingereth,  
This difficulty of dying?”

One day in early April 1824, she came downstairs for the last time. It was at the usual hour, and the dear old family room

seemed full of the calm which filled her own bosom. Her speech was faint and low; but Isaac was at her side. Into his ear she whispered her last wishes, and with them words of love, which through long years seemed ever as fresh as the recollections of yesterday.

In the afternoon she took up her pen; only a few words more. She could not indeed sit at the desk, but supported in Isaac's arms, a few lines were wearily traced upon the page.

*“Monday.*—Oh, my dear friends, if you knew what thoughts I have now, you would see, as I do, that the whole business of life is preparation for death. Let it be so with you. If I have ever written or spoken anything you deem good advice, be assured I would, if I could, repeat it with tenfold force. Think of this when I am gone.

“May God bless you all. Farewell, farewell! Dear S\_\_\_\_\_, dear E\_\_\_\_\_, dear P\_\_\_\_\_, dear J\_\_\_\_\_, farewell! Yours till death, and after that, I hope. JANE TAYLOR.”

Martin arrived from London, and Anne was hurrying on the way.

She passed a quiet night, but morning found

her unable to rise. The sweet ministry of father, mother, sister, brothers floated through the chamber of death. Anne not having come, a letter was despatched. But Jane felt her life ebbing away. Never was she to see the dear face again on earth.

What does she say? Is the distrusting woman still vexed by fears? Is she alone in that narrow way where the nearest and dearest part company?

“‘Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,’” she said, breaking on the stillness of the hour.

And soon after, with the same emphasis:—

“‘Jesus, to thy dear faithful hand  
My naked soul I trust;  
And my flesh waits for thy command  
To drop into the dust.’”

Repeating with victorious fervour the words:—

“‘Jesus, to thee my naked soul,  
My naked soul I trust.’”

That evening she slept in Jesus.

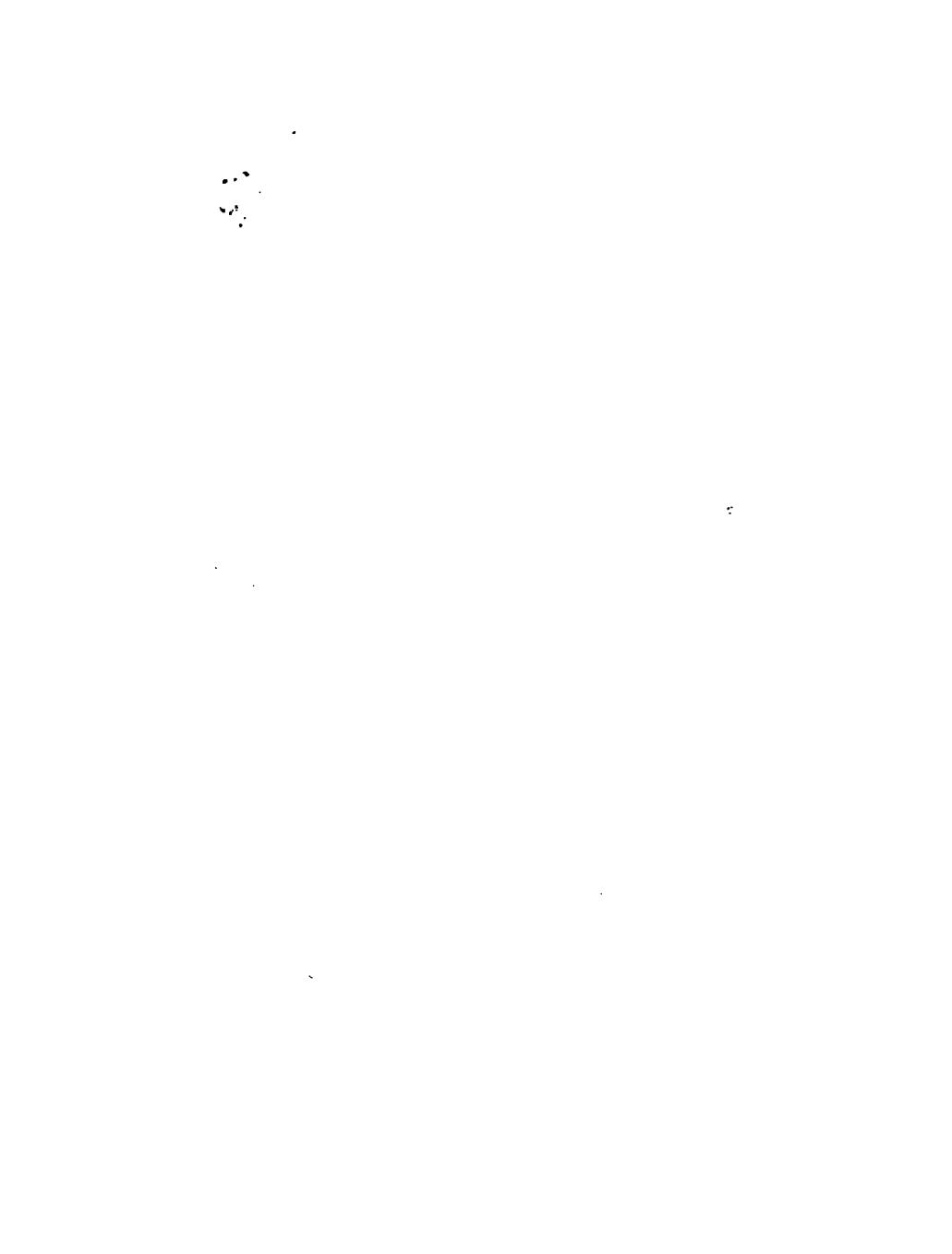
A simple monument marks her final earthly resting-place in the churchyard at Ongar.

The next year, Isaac Taylor married Elizabeth Medland, and made a home at Stanford Rivers, a secluded country village two miles from his father's house at Ongar. This was the scene of his literary labours.

The "Natural History of Enthusiasm," "Fanaticism," and "Spiritual Despotism," followed by "Saturday Evening," were read and welcomed by a large circle of admirers. Their author was unknown. Who is he? was the question of the day: not answered till called upon to stand for the vacant Chair of Logic in the University of Edinburgh, in 1836. His anonymous shield was then put by, and Isaac Taylor became a marked man.

His biography of Jane, which preceded the above-named works, is warm with the love which knit them together.

Isaac Taylor died in the spring of 1865, and the parted ones met in "the better land."



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